

Conditions Influencing School Attendance in CSI Montana Districts:

Findings from 2025-26 Surveys and
Focus Groups

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JEM & R LLC
under subcontract with University of Montana

JULY 8, 2026

Executive Summary

This study examined the conditions influencing student attendance in fifteen Montana Comprehensive Support and Improvement (CSI) districts during the 2025–26 school year. The work was commissioned to help the Montana Office of Public Instruction move beyond treating attendance as only an individual student behavior and instead understand how policy, school climate, and family and community context shape whether students are able and willing to attend school regularly. The study used a mixed-method design combining surveys of approximately 1,493 students, 199 parents, and 388 staff across the CSI districts with student and parent focus groups and a review of district attendance policies.

Data collection focused on five core questions: how attendance policies are structured and experienced; what factors support or discourage regular attendance; how parents view the importance of regular attendance; what barriers students and families face as it relates to attendance; and which strategies stakeholders believe would improve attendance.

Attendance Policies and How Families Experience Them

Across participating districts, attendance policies align with Montana compulsory attendance law and generally frame attendance as a daily academic requirement tied to student success. Districts typically track elementary attendance twice daily and secondary attendance by class period; thresholds for being marked absent and the number of absences that trigger concern vary but often include graduated notifications, attendance plans, and potential credit loss or legal referral after repeated unexcused absences. Many districts also bar students with unexcused absences from extracurricular participation and a few offer incentives such as final exam exemptions or attendance-based rewards.

Students and parents reported that policies feel most effective when expectations are clear, consistently enforced, and realistically account for health and family circumstances. Confusion about what counts as excused versus unexcused, documentation requirements, and make-up work expectations emerged as a source of friction that can strain family–school relationships. Students noted that rigid make-up policies or punitive responses can create unintended consequences, such as coming to school sick or avoiding legitimate mental health days because of the workload or penalties they anticipate. Overall, stakeholder feedback suggests policy refinements should focus on clarity, transparency, and balancing accountability with flexibility for health and family realities.

Factors Affecting Attendance: Connections, Engagement, and Safety

Survey results show broad agreement among students, parents, and staff that social connection, supportive adults, and a safe school environment are central drivers of attendance. Students most often cited feeling connected to friends, participating in extracurricular activities, and feeling safe and welcome at school as important reasons to attend. Parents and staff also rated supportive teachers and staff, friendships, and a

safe, respectful environment as key influences, with extracurricular activities and personal interest in coursework seen as important but somewhat secondary.

Focus group data deepen this picture by highlighting how belonging, academic engagement, and safety intersect. Students across districts described friendships and the chance to see peers as primary daily motivators, while parents emphasized both social connection and the stabilizing role of predictable routines at home and school. Engagement emerged as a protective factor: students were more likely to attend when instruction felt hands-on and relevant, when electives and activities matched their interests, and when they had meaningful roles or responsibilities at school. Although students generally reported feeling physically safe, emotional safety—freedom from bullying, gossip, and social conflict, and confidence that adults will respond to problems—was more strongly linked to day-to-day willingness to attend.

Parent Perspectives on the Importance of Attendance

Most parents reported that daily attendance is important but not all see perfect or near-perfect attendance as essential. Roughly three-quarters of surveyed parents rated daily attendance as important, yet nearly a quarter indicated that it is not or only somewhat important for their child to attend every day. When asked how many days of absence in a year are acceptable, nearly half of parents indicated five or fewer days, while others were comfortable with higher levels of absence.

Focus group discussions suggest that parents view attendance as a shared responsibility shaped by student needs, family routines, and school conditions. Parents described reinforcing attendance through household expectations, consistent bedtimes, and morning routines, while also recognizing developmental differences: younger children often show more enthusiasm for school, whereas adolescent attendance is more sensitive to mood, social dynamics, and competing responsibilities such as work or caregiving. Many parents framed effective school strategies as those that complement, rather than replace family commitment, such as creating welcoming classrooms, offering diverse activities, providing individualized support, and recognizing effort, while acknowledging that family circumstances and intergenerational patterns can limit what schools alone can change.

Barriers to Attendance

Across surveys and focus groups, attendance barriers appear layered, combining student motivation, health, academic experience, family obligations, and structural conditions such as transportation and weather. Students most frequently identified feeling unmotivated or bored, academic challenges, weather, family responsibilities, and health or emotional struggles as making regular attendance difficult. Parents similarly pointed to lack of motivation, emotional and mental health challenges, and medical issues as primary barriers, while rating weather, transportation, and family responsibilities as less significant overall. Staff emphasized home instability, lack of motivation or boredom, and personal or emotional struggles as common causes of absences, with transportation and feeling unsafe at school reported less frequently as chronic drivers.¹¹

Qualitative feedback underscores how these factors interact. Students described boredom, repetitive instruction, and feeling either overwhelmed or insufficiently challenged as drivers of disengagement, especially once they fall behind and returning feels harder. Emotional and mental health concerns, including anxiety, depression, grief, and seasonal low energy, were recurrent themes, often compounded by long travel times for behavioral health or medical appointments that can result in full-day absences. Families and students also referenced sleep deprivation, long commutes, severe winter weather, and rural distance as practical challenges that make consistent attendance difficult despite motivation. For some students, family-level factors such as caregiving responsibilities, complex household structures, and inconsistent routines further complicate the ability to get to school on time or at all.

Suggestions and Supports to Improve Attendance

When asked what would help students attend more regularly, students, parents, and staff converged on a set of supports centered on relationships, engaging learning, and targeted flexibility. Students reported that being with friends, having a specific goal or reason to attend, and support from parents and school staff help them attend on days when motivation is low. Parents emphasized parental support and routines, meaningful responsibility at school, clear goals, seeing friends, and encouragement from teachers. Staff highlighted seeing friends, encouragement from teachers and staff, parental support, and clear goals as especially helpful for unmotivated students.

Parents identified relevant, career-connected curriculum and programs that make school more enjoyable as the most promising strategies to improve attendance, followed by student voice in learning, incentives for meeting attendance goals, and strengthened mental health and targeted academic supports. Staff prioritized increased parent involvement, engaging extracurricular programs, mental health services, mentoring or one-on-one attention, relevant curriculum, and community outreach as key levers. Focus groups provided additional recommendations, including: more hands-on and project-based instruction; expanded electives and enrichment beyond athletics; reasonable flexibility in schedules, make-up work, and definitions of excused absences; improved communication with families; and attention to basic conditions such as food, facilities, and transportation reliability. Students and caregivers emphasized that supports are most effective when they make school feel worth attending.

Overall, the findings indicate that attendance is closely tied to the everyday conditions students experience at school, not just whether they follow the rules. For the state, this points to the importance of combining clear, fair attendance guidance with support for local efforts that strengthen relationships, ensure emotional and physical safety, make learning engaging and relevant, and expand access to health and mental health supports, particularly in rural communities where distance and weather add challenges. It also underscores the need to review policies and systems, such as transportation, scheduling, make-up work expectations, and communication with families, so they reduce, rather than reinforce, barriers when students miss school for legitimate reasons. Aligning policy, resources, and technical assistance around these conditions can help schools create environments where regular attendance is both expected and realistically achievable for students and families.

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Conditions Influencing School Attendance in Montana CSI Schools

I. INTRODUCTION

Regular school attendance is shaped by more than student motivation. It reflects a set of interconnected conditions that determine whether students feel prepared, supported, and able to attend school each day. Chronic absenteeism, however, remains one of the most urgent challenges facing Montana schools. Focusing on seventeen Montana Comprehensive Support and Improvement (CSI) schools, this study explores school conditions and attendance policies, as well as the perspectives of students, parents, and staff, to better understand the factors influencing regular attendance. Data were collected during the 2025-26 school year through surveys of students, parents, and staff, alongside focus groups with students and parents. Notably, some parent focus groups also included district staff, as students often attend the districts where their parents work. Additional information on attendance-related policies and practices was gathered from district administrators. Surveys were completed by approximately 1,493 students, 199 parents, and 388 staff members from 15 CSI districts¹. All 15 districts also participated in focus groups.

II. SCHOOL ATTENDANCE POLICIES

Attendance policies across all participating districts share several common elements and align with Montana compulsory attendance laws; this means that every child in Montana must attend public school once they turn 7 to age 16, unless they are enrolled in a nonpublic or homeschool. Montana compulsory attendance laws. Most districts treat attendance as a daily academic requirement that is a core part of academic success, backed by parent notification, clear thresholds for “too many” absences, and escalating consequences. However, they differ in how quickly they intervene, how harsh the penalties are, and how much they rely on incentives versus punishment.

At each district, attendance is recorded in the morning and after lunch for elementary school students, and at each class period for middle and high school students. While the threshold for considering students absent differs by district (e.g., after missing first 10 minutes, by a set time, end of class), generally, students not in attendance and without parent documentation of the absence are considered unexcused. Absences are excused due to illness, bereavement, legal/medical appointments, family emergencies, school activities or sports events, and approved education programs (i.e. 4-H or FFA). School E also notes that up to two hours per week for religious instruction can be excused. Students with unexcused absences receive notifications from the district via automated phone calls, texts and/or emails. Some districts alert parents within 10 minutes of attendance and others alert by the end of school day.

¹ Participating districts included: School B, School P, School G, School J, School C, School L, School K, School F, School A, School E, School N, School D, School I, School M and School H.

Attendance policies are included in student handbooks and most districts describe emphasizing these policies at beginning of school year events such as an open house or student orientation. Thresholds or concerns for interventions for unexcused absences and tardies vary but for most districts, parents are notified in writing for each unexcused absence and students are expelled or required to appear before the school board after 10-14 unexcused absences. All districts describe actions and interventions after multiple absences (i.e., 3, 5, 7, etc.) in an attempt to correct the absences. Most districts also describe a process in which juvenile authorities, tribal courts, Truancy Court or the county attorney may be involved. Some districts provide support-oriented interventions with meetings with school principals, home visits, attendance contracts, etc. Other districts emphasize compulsory attendance and parental responsibility, while others establish explicit absence limits tied to credit loss or withdrawal.

With respect to incentives for good attendance, School J indicated students with good grades and attendance can skip semester finals and School J, School F, School E and School I report rewarding students and classes with high attendance. No other incentives were described by districts except that students absent from school are barred from participating in any extracurricular activities for the day. A summary of key components of each districts' attendance policy is shown in Table 1.

Table 1. District Attendance Policy Summary

District	Attendance Threshold / trigger	Parent Notification	Intervention Strategies	Campus Lunch Policy
School B	6+ absences at-risk; 10th absence = chronically absent	Contact at 6th and 8th absence; attendance office contact when absent	Attendance plan/ contract, extracurricular loss, court/CFS referral for chronic absenteeism	HS off-campus lunch allowed under rules
School P	10-day limit; 5 absences at-risk; 10 absences board appearance	Not specified	After-school program sessions, board review, possible loss of semester test privileges	Open Campus to walk home only, no driving off campus without permission
School G	12 absences per class/semester; 7th and 11th absences flagged	Parents notified on 7th and 11th absences	Tribal court referral at 12 unexcused absences	Closed campus
School Q	10 absence threshold triggers probation	Daily automated calls/text/email at 9:30 a.m.	Attendance probation, summer school or tutoring, tribal truancy court for 10 unexcused	Closed campus
School R	Letters at 3, 5, 7 absences; 10 absences = certified letter; 14th may withhold credit	Phone calls and letters; Fort Peck Tribes Truancy Court copied	Board appearance, credit/grade withholding, home visits	No open campus noted
School J	Student may be dropped after 13 unexcused semester absences or 10	Automated calls every period absent; letters at 5 and 10 days	Attendance meeting, possible drop for attendance issues, home visits, finals exemption as	Open campus for lunch

District	Attendance Threshold / trigger	Parent Notification	Intervention Strategies	Campus Lunch Policy
	consecutive unexcused absences		incentive for good attendance	
School C	5 absences triggers parent meeting; 8 absences triggers board of trustee meeting	Parents called after absence; meetings at 5 and 8 absences	Attendance plan/meeting, possible loss of credit, board review	No open campus noted
School L	5, 7, 10 absences notice; 10 absences per class/semester results in withheld credit	Automated calls at each absence; 5 th , 7 th and 10 th unexcused triggers phone and letter;	Home visits, attendance board, tribal court & social service notification, credit withheld after 10 absences	Not specified
School S	3 absences notifies parents via letter and a home visit conducted; 5 absences notifies law enforcement and tribal education	Absence notification and follow-up by phone	Home visits by truancy officer, tribal truancy officer & court referrals	Closed campus
School K	10 absences per class per semester; 5th and 7th absence trigger action	Robo-calls at absence, counselor letters after 5 and 7 absences	Academic contract, study hall over 10 absences	Closed campus
School F	3, 5, 7 absence notices; hearing after more than 5 days; tribal court at 9 absences	Automatic calls/text/email; letters at intervals	Attendance committee hearing, contract, tribal court notification, school liaison home visits	Closed Campus
School A	10 absences per semester can lead to loss of credit	Contact by end of day	Principal/board discretion, make-up work rules	Closed campus
School E	10 absences per semester; 11th/12th/13th have grade caps or loss of credit	Phone/text/email alerts, ongoing attendance updates to families as needed	Suspension/expulsion, tribal court referral, loss of off-campus privilege/points/credit	Open campus for HS
School N	Not specified	Automated Infinite Campus dialer.	Meeting with student, parent/guardian, attendance contract, Board review/action	Closed campus except for upperclassmen with parent permission
School D	10+ absences per semester affects credit	Call after absence; written note if no contact	Credit loss, conferences at 5/8/10 unexcused absences; attendance plan, county attorney referral after 10	HS open campus
School I	6 absences per class/semester; 12 total days/year	Family contacted through attendance	Proficiency hour after 12 days, grade cap rules, summer recovery	Open campus with driving restrictions (JHS

District	Attendance Threshold / trigger	Parent Notification	Intervention Strategies	Campus Lunch Policy
		process at each unverified absence		students may not ride in a car and HS students are limited)

Detailed attendance policy information for each district is described as follows². Of note, district policies vary in terms of the breadth and type of available information.

School B's policy focuses on the importance of regular attendance and compliance with Montana compulsory attendance law. The policy emphasizes parental responsibility for ensuring student attendance. The parent/guardian must inform the school in advance of the absence whenever possible and if this is not received, the school will make a reasonable effort to contact a parent/guardian to verify the students absence. Absences not verified by the parent/guardian or recorded as unexcused may be handled as part of the disciplinary process. Students accruing six (6) or more absences in a semester (excluding school-related absences) will be considered truant and may be subject to disciplinary action. This may include an assessment of a penalty by a court of law against the student and his or her parents. The District's Attendance Officer may request a meeting with the truant student's parent or legal guardian to develop a truancy plan in the event of continued truancy. On the 6th and 8th absence in a term, the principal or designee will contact the student and parents to make them aware of their accumulated absences. On the 10th absence in a term, the student will be considered chronically absent. The student and their parent/guardian will enter into the Board approved Attendance Contract. If the administration determines that the contract has been violated, the student will lose the right to attend any district sponsored extracurricular and cocurricular activities and may result in a referral to Child and Family Services or to the Mineral County Attorney as a child truant from school.

School P directly connects attendance to academic performance. Students not present in class for any reason other than school-sponsored activities are required to provide notice from parents/guardians for the absence otherwise the absence is unexcused. After 5 unexcused absences a student will be considered at risk and a letter is mailed to the parents. After 10 total unexcused absences in a semester, the student and parent/guardian must appear before the attendance board. The student may be required to complete 1 afterschool program session for each additional they are absent for the remainder of the semester.

School G's connects attendance with students' ability to be dependable in career, personal and social spaces as well as current academic performance. Students are limited to 12 absences per class per semester, and parents are notified via phone or letter

² As of the writing of this report, attendance policies were unavailable from School M and School H.

at 7 and 11 absences. After 12 unexcused absences, the district will submit documentation to the Tribal Courts.

School Q identifies attendance as the most essential component of academic success. The district uses daily automated calls, texts, and emails to notify parents of absences and maintains clear excused versus unexcused absence procedures. An absence may only be excused if the parent calls the office within 24 hours of the absence and after 5 excused absences in a semester documentation is required. Students that surpass 10 absences in a semester are placed on Attendance Probation and are required to make up time in summer school and/or afterschool tutoring to avoid the loss of credit. After 10 unexcused absences, the Tribal Truancy court is contacted and the student is required to attend summer school sessions. The district emphasizes a closed-campus sign-in/sign-out structure.

At School R, students are considered absent if not in class 15 minutes after the tardy bell rings. Elementary marks attendance in the morning and after lunch and junior high/high school marks attendance for each class period. Parents/guardians of absent students are notified via phone 10 minutes after attendance is taken. Parents and the Truancy Court are notified in writing after 3, 5 and 7 unexcused absences. A certified letter to parents is issued after 10 absences, and the student and parent must appear before the school board. After 14 absences, the student may have credit/grades withheld and must appear before the school board. These attendance policies are included in the student handbook which is distributed at the beginning of the school year. The district collaborates with Truancy Court plus incentives for good attendance to address chronic absences. Additionally, home visits for chronically absent students are conducted by the home school coordinator. Campus is closed for lunch and they do not currently have a student resource officer (SRO) on campus.

At School J, students are considered absent after missing the first 10 minutes of class. Absences are entered every class period (for MS/HS students), and an automated system is used to contact parents/guardians when a student is absent from class. Letters are also mailed to parents after 5 and 10 unexcused absences in a semester. Additionally, a Student Advocate will set up attendance meetings with the families when the student is close to 13 unexcused absences and will also check on students that have 3-4 consecutive absences and no contact with the family. Students with 13 unexcused absences in a semester or 10 consecutive unexcused absences can be dropped from school. To promote good attendance, students with an A or B and 5 or less absences/tardies do not have to take semester finals. These attendance expectations are included in the student handbook and emphasized during their beginning year presentation. The school conducts home visits and welfare checks on students via the student advocate or district student welfare specialist. The school has an open campus policy for lunch and offers a number of sports and clubs for students to participate in. Students with unexcused absences cannot participate in extracurricular activities, and the district plans to use award ceremonies next year to highlight attendance quarterly.

School C's policy closely mirrors Montana state attendance requirements, emphasizing the educational value of regular attendance and legal attendance obligations for school-age students. The district uses a tighter semester-based threshold, with parent

meetings after 5 class absences to create an attendance plan. After 8 absences a meeting is scheduled with the parents, school administration and board of trustees. Violations to the attendance plan can result in the loss of credit or other consequences.

School L absences per class per semester before students risk losing course credit. The policy specifies acceptable excused absences including illness, bereavement, educational activities, and medical/legal appointments. After each absence the school notifies the parent via automated phone calls/messaging system. After 5 and 7 cumulative unexcused absences from school/class, a phone call and letter is sent to the parents and the parent/guardian must contact the school either in person or over the phone to acknowledge receipt of the letter. If contact cannot be made with a parent/guardian, then the Home-School Coordinator will conduct a home visit. After 7 absences parents need to meet with the high school principal to explain in detail the alternatives for non-compliance. The Crow Tribal Court system and BIA Social Services are also notified promptly in writing and by phone. After the 10th cumulative absence, the student may have credit withheld and must appear before the Attendance Board. Failure to attend this meeting will result in a loss of credit and students will be dropped after 10 consecutive unexcused absences.

School S uses a clear truancy definition and is strict about class participation and leaving campus. Students are considered absent after missing the first 10 minutes of class. Classwork and assignments missed from an absence or truancy must be made up. Students and parents are notified after the first absence. After the 3rd absence in a quarter parents will receive a letter and a home visit will be conducted. After the 5th absence for any reason the district can involve tribal truancy officers and courts. The district maintains a closed campus policy except for extenuating circumstances.

At School K, students are considered absent after the first 10 minutes of a class. Robo calls are sent to parents whenever a student has an unexcused absence, and counselors send letters to parents of at-risk students. The district follows the 10-day rule attendance policy. After 10 unexcused absences an academic contract is developed with the student, parent and superintendent. If the total number of absences exceeds 10 per semester, the student is dropped from class and assigned to study hall. This policy is outlined in the student handbook and read to parents and students at the beginning of the year. Absences are recorded in the morning and afternoon for elementary students and every class period for middle and high school students.

School F is highly intervention-based, with notices at 3, 5, and 7 absences, hearings after more than 5 days, and tribal court notification at 9 absences. It also has a closed-campus Jr./Sr. High School and a strong home-visit/welfare-check system through a school liaison. These attendance policies are outlined in the student handbook that parents and students read and acknowledge upon enrollment. The school will attempt to contact the parent by phone after each unexcused absence via Infinite Campus automated system. If the parent does not provide notification prior to the absence, the parent must provide written reasons immediately after the absence otherwise it is considered unexcused. The district works with the Tribal Courts, Social Services, TANF, Child Welfare Services, and School F Health to address issues around chronic absenteeism. Weekly and quarterly incentives are given for improved attendance. The Jr and Sr High School is a closed

campus, however specific groups of students may be allowed off campus privileges with earned.

At School A, a student is considered absent or tardy if not in class by 8:15 am and written or verbal communication from the parent/guardian has not been received. A student absence can be considered excused if due to illness, bereavement, legal/medical appointments, or family emergencies. The school will attempt to contact the student's Parent by the end of the day to notify the absence if an excuse has not been provided. Students are expected to make up any missed assignments and students that are persistently truant may be subject to disciplinary action by the school board. These attendance policies are included in the school handbook. Students are not allowed to leave school at lunch time and doors remain locked for security.

At School E, students not in attendance at the end of class are considered absent and students arriving in class after the bell are considered tardy. Automated phone calls, text messages and emails from Infinite Campus are used to notify parents of the absence or tardy. After 10 days of absence during the school year students are required to attend summer school. The exemptions for this include absence from an emergency, death in immediate family, illness or hospitalization with doctors statement, religious instruction (2 hours per week), organized education program or school activity and sports events. After the first unexcused absence, students receive zeros for all classes missed and parents are notified and an office referral is placed on the students' permanent record. After the second instance, in addition to zeros and an office referral, students receive a minimum two-day out of school suspension and are referred to juvenile authorities. At the third instance, students receive a five day out of school suspension and follow up with juvenile authorities. After the fourth instance, the student is suspended and recommended for expulsion. Students that are absent are unable to participate in any extracurricular activities that day, or if absent on Friday, occurring that weekend. For high school students missing 10 days of school 10 periods of a class during 1 semester forfeits open campus privileges and will be given an incomplete on their quarterly report card (including documented medical but excluding school-related). These attendance expectations are communicated during the open house and are included in the student handbook. Parents also receive weekly grade and attendance updates. For elementary students absences are entered in the morning and afternoon and each class period for high school students. There are monthly attendance incentives for classes with the highest average attendance.

School N maintains a straightforward attendance policy, requiring regular attendance and parental notification of absences. The district uses attendance contracts and restricts athletic participation following non-medical absences. Parents and students are notified of these attendance policies via the student handbook and attendance contracts. Students are considered absent after missing the first 10 minutes of class and parents are notified of each absence via Infinite Campus automated dialer. The district has a closed campus policy except for upperclassmen with parent permission.

At School D absences can be excused due to illness, bereavement, medical/legal appointments or family emergencies. Absences are also excused if due to school approved extracurricular activities. If a student is sick and absent for 5 consecutive days,

documentation from a medical professional must be provided or absences will be considered unexcused. Students that are persistently absent (unexcused) from school for any part of the day, for an aggregate of three days are considered truant and subject to disciplinary action, loss of credit or request for recovery of each unexcused absence. The District Attendance Officer meets with truant student's parent/guardian to develop a truancy plan in the event of continued truancy. After 5 unexcused absences of the school year, the parent/guardian will be notified and expected to meet with the school principal to develop a plan to improve attendance habits. After 8 unexcused absences, the principal will schedule a conference with all the students' teachers, administrators, parents and family members to determine why the student isn't attending regularly, communicate attendance expectations and state laws, illicit suggestion from family members on increasing students' school engagement and create an attendance plan. After 10 unexcused absences, the district will determine if there is reason to suspect educational neglect and the school may refer the matter to the county attorney.

School I allows for only 6 unexcused absences per class per semester, with a year total of 12 days. It also links attendance directly to proficiency, semester test exemption, and required intervention hours after the threshold is exceeded. If students have not missed more than 6 days and have at least an 80% for a semester grade, the student will be exempt from the semester test. After 12 days of absences any student not showing proficiency (C) in an academic area will be required to attend proficiency hour until such time that the student shows proficiency in the academic area(s). These policies are communicated via the student handbook and notifications are made to the parent/guardian upon each unverified absence. The district has an open campus policy for lunch, however, junior high students are not allowed to ride in a vehicle with anyone during lunch and high school students may only drive on a specific street in town.

A. Student and Parent Feedback on Attendance Policies

Based on focus group and survey feedback, parents and students described attendance policies as most effective when they are clear, fair, and aligned with real-life barriers. Parents repeatedly returned to the need for consistency and shared expectations between home and school, arguing that routines and predictable follow-through matter as much as any written policy.

"Routine and expectation - routine is great" (Parent)

At the same time, families flagged uncertainty about how rules are applied in practice, especially around medical absences and how schools distinguish categories of missed time. Parents emphasized that unclear definitions and documentation expectations (for example, what counts as excused vs. unexcused) can become a major friction point.

"What's considered excused and what's unexcused?" (Parent)

Students' feedback sharpened this concern into a warning about unintended consequences: when absence rules trigger heavy make-up requirements or harsh penalties, students may avoid taking time off even when they genuinely need it. Students connected attendance pressure to both physical health (coming to school sick) and

mental health (feeling unable to take a needed break), especially when absences automatically create large make-up burdens.

“We have to write an article for every single class we miss” (Student)

“...makes it so kids come to school sick” (Student)

“If you take [a mental health day], you’re immediately criticized for it” (Student)

Incentives came up in both groups, but they were generally framed as secondary to relationships, engagement, and fairness. Parents often saw rewards as a nice add-on rather than a primary driver, though recognition still mattered. Some incentive structures did appear especially motivating for older students when tied to meaningful outcomes (for example, exemptions from finals), and students also suggested community-based rewards tied to shared attendance goals.

“The kids said the incentive of getting out of finals” (Parent)

“...having an award for like having good attendance” (Student)

Overall, the feedback points toward the same policy direction: clearer definitions (especially excused/unexcused), realistic flexibility for health needs (including mental health), and incentives that complement a supportive school climate.

III. FACTORS AFFECTING ATTENDANCE

Survey results show that feeling connected to friends is the most important factor influencing student attendance (71% important), followed by extracurricular activities (59%) and feeling safe in a welcoming environment (58%). Interest in school lessons/topics and having support from adults also were rated as important by over half of the students.

Table 2. Student Survey: Important Factors for School Attendance

<i>How important are these factors for you to attend school regularly?</i>	Not-Somewhat Important	Neutral	Important – Very Important
Feeling connected to my friends (n=1415)	10.6%	18.3%	71.1%
Being able to participate in extracurricular activities (sports, clubs, etc.) (n=1410)	20.7%	20.3%	59.0%
Feeling safe and welcome at school (n=1411)	15.9%	26.3%	57.8%
Having a personal interest in the lessons or topics being taught (n=1412)	15.8%	29.7%	54.5%
Having teachers and staff who support me (n=1410)	15.6%	30.3%	54.1%

Parents identified the most important factors for regular student attendance as having supportive teachers and staff (95% important) and a safe, respectful school environment (95%). Connections with friends and interest in lessons/topics were also rated as important by most parents (86%). The least important factor, though still highly rated, was the opportunity to participate in extracurricular activities (77%).

Table 3. Parent Survey: Important Factors for School Attendance

<i>How important are these factors for your student(s) to attend school regularly?</i>	Not-Somewhat Important	Neutral	Important – Very Important
Having teachers and staff who support them (n=154)	1.9%	3.2%	94.8%
Having a safe and respectful school environment (n=154)	1.3%	3.9%	94.8%
Feeling connected to their friends (n=154)	3.9%	9.7%	86.4%
Having a personal interest in the lessons or topics being taught (n=154)	2.6%	11.7%	85.7%
Being able to participate in extracurricular activities (sports, clubs, etc.) (n=154)	10.4%	12.3%	77.3%

In comparison, staff indicated that friends/social connections (93%) and having supportive teachers (88%) were the most important factors influencing student attendance. Being in a safe environment (86%) and participation in extracurricular activities (84%) were also highly rated. The least important influence, although still highly rated, was personal interest in lessons or topics (68%).

Table 4. Staff Survey: Important Influences for School Attendance

<i>How important are the following in influencing student attendance?</i>	Not-Somewhat important	Neutral	Important-Very important
Friendships/social connection (n=343)	3.5%	3.8%	92.7%
Supportive teachers and staff (n=343)	3.5%	9.0%	87.5%
Safe and respectful school environment (n=343)	3.8%	10.2%	86.0%
Participation in extracurricular activities (n=343)	7.0%	9.3%	83.7%
Personal interest in lessons or topics (n=343)	8.7%	23.6%	67.6%

Staff similarly believed social connections/friends (94% agree) and a safe, respectful school environment (88%) were significant motivators while academically-related were rated the least (enjoying learning, desire to succeed, and staying on track academically).

Table 5. Staff Survey: Motivators of School Attendance

<i>The following factors motivate students to attend school regularly.</i>	Disagree	Neutral	Agree
Social connections/friends (n=343)	0.3%	5.5%	94.2%
Safe and respectful environment (n=344)	2.6%	9.9%	87.5%
Access to food (n=344)	2.3%	11.9%	85.8%
Supportive teachers/staff (n=344)	2.0%	12.5%	85.5%
Extracurricular activities (n=343)	5.0%	12.5%	82.5%
Relevant/interesting coursework (n=344)	7.8%	29.4%	62.8%
Enjoyment of learning (n=344)	16.6%	25.0%	58.4%
Family expectations (n=342)	11.1%	31.0%	57.9%
Desire to succeed academically (n=344)	13.4%	29.1%	57.6%
Staying on track academically (n=343)	14.6%	37.0%	48.4%
Other (n=22)*	0.0%	45.5%	54.5%

*Other: Being away from home, sense of belonging, program requirements

Students were also asked to select all the reasons why they like to attend school. Across all grade spans, students indicated that they liked coming to school to see their friends (80%), and to get good grades (53%). Among elementary (K-5) students, other top reasons were supportive teachers and staff (80%), enjoyment for learning new things (76%), and participating in school activities (66%). Most secondary (6-12) students also indicated not wanting to fall behind on schoolwork (51%) as being a motivator.

Table 6. Student Survey: Reasons for Liking School (% multi-choice item was selected)

Why do you like to come to school? (n=1441, multi-select)*	Overall	Elementary	Secondary
I look forward to seeing my friends	70.9%	79.7%	68.6%
I want to earn good grades	53.1%	76.7%	46.8%
I participate in school activities (sports, clubs, etc.)	44.4%	66.1%	38.7%
My family or guardian wants me to	41.8%	55.1%	38.3%
I don't want to fall behind in school work	40.3%	--	51.0%
I enjoy learning new things	36.4%	76.1%	26.0%
I have supportive teachers/staff	29.9%	80.4%	16.6%
It is preparing me for college or my future	28.0%	--	35.4%
I get food to eat	21.8%	42.9%	16.2%
I feel safe and respected at school	21.4%	58.5%	11.7%
Nothing really makes me want to come	13.3%	22.6%	10.8%
I am learning interesting things that are connected to my personal interests	12.6%	--	16.0%
I like the structure and routine	8.6%	--	10.9%
Other (please specify)*	4.6%	--	5.8%

*Other: Playing sports, legal requirements, social interactions, favorite classes, school enjoyment

When asked about factors that would encourage more regular attendance, both elementary and secondary students identified programs (e.g., clubs, extracurricular activities) that make school more enjoyable as the top factor (44%). Among elementary students, other influences reported by the majority included incentives or rewards (54%) and flexible/supportive transportation options (52%). Notably, over half of students (59%) reported they already attend school regularly.

Table 7. Student Survey: Factors that Support Regular Attendance

What would help you attend school more regularly? (n=1409, multi-select)	Overall	Elementary	Secondary
I already attend school regularly	58.9%	67.0%	56.9%
Programs that make school more enjoyable (e.g. clubs, activities)	44.2%	73.3%	36.8%
More incentives or rewards for attending regularly	28.2%	53.7%	21.8%
Better ways to manage stress or emotions (e.g. counseling, mental health services)	25.8%	43.9%	21.3%
More flexible or supportive transportation options	20.9%	51.6%	13.1%
Increased communication with my parents/guardians	15.9%	32.3%	11.7%
More one-on-one time with teachers or mentors	16.0%	39.3%	10.1%
Other (please specify)*	5.0%	--	6.3%

*Other: Social interactions, favorite classes, assistance at school, supportive administration

According to open-ended survey feedback, students most often indicated they come to school regularly because of friends and social connections, followed by school activities like sports and school clubs, commitment to grades and future goals, family expectations and parental support, and transportation access.

The following section expands on these results and is organized by key themes and dimensions that parents and students identified as factors influencing their attendance.

A. Social Connections and Adult Support/Expectations

Consistent with survey findings, across fall and spring focus groups, social connection was the most frequently cited reason students attend school, with peers, activities, and a sense of belonging shaping daily motivation across grade levels. Elementary students more often emphasized enjoyment and feeling cared for at school, while secondary students more frequently described attendance as tied to activities, academic progress, and preparation for what comes next. Across districts, the pattern was consistent: attendance is strongest when students feel connected, supported, and engaged in the school environment.

Social Connection and Sense of Belonging

Friendships were repeatedly described as a central pull factor for coming to school. One student spoke directly about how close peer relationships can make attendance feel non-negotiable: “If I didn’t have such close friends at the school, I wouldn’t want to come to school. That’s like my biggest thing.” Other students echoed that school is where social life and community happen, describing the importance of having “a community... that’s behind me... and it’s going to push me.” Across sites, students framed school not just as a place for learning, but as a dependable space to see friends, feel known, and feel like they belong.

Across districts, parents described social connection as one of the strongest day-to-day motivators for attending. Friendships, peer interaction, and the desire to avoid missing shared experiences frequently pulled students to school. At the same time, parents and students described how peer dynamics can cut both ways; strong friendships encourage participation, while conflict, exclusion, or bullying can make coming to school feel emotionally costly.

“They love it. They love getting up in the morning in school... They like to be social.”

Together, these perspectives suggest that belonging plays a foundational role in attendance. When students feel socially connected, attending school becomes part of their routine rather than a daily choice.

Supportive Adults

Students and parents also emphasized the importance of teachers, coaches, and staff who are approachable, encouraging, and consistent. Students described feeling more motivated when adults notice their effort, offer help, and create welcoming classrooms. Parents also highlighted the importance of trusted adults at school, especially for youth who may be less willing to confide in parents, suggesting that relationships outside the household can stabilize attendance when students are stressed or struggling.

Family Expectations

Parents consistently described attendance as an expectation reinforced through household norms—morning routines, clear rules, and consistent messaging about the importance of school. Students referenced these influences less directly but often described attending because it was expected of them.

“My parents won’t let me skip.”

Community attitudes also appeared to matter. In some areas, parents noted that local norms can either strengthen or compete with school participation, indicating that attendance is influenced by the broader environment as well as individual motivation.

B. Engagement & Enjoyment for School

Student engagement emerged as another important condition shaping attendance. Across districts, students connected their motivation to attend directly to the quality, relevance, and variety of their learning experiences. Among the Montana students who completed the survey, half look forward to coming to school every day or almost every day, and 30% look forward to coming to school at least some days.

Table 8. Student Survey: Enjoyment for School

	Never- Rarely	Some days	Every day – Almost every day
Do you look forward to coming to school? (n=1377)	19.7%	30.3%	50.0%

Academic Engagement and Future Goals

While students were less likely to describe academics as their primary reason for attending, coursework still played an important role. Many reported coming to school to avoid falling behind, maintain grades, or prepare for future opportunities such as college or careers. Others expressed greater motivation when classes felt interesting, interactive, and appropriately challenging. Parents provided additional context, explaining that students may disengage when coursework is either too difficult or not challenging enough. Once students fall behind, catching up can feel overwhelming, which may further discourage attendance.

“Once you fall behind, it’s hard to come back because you feel like you’re already lost.”

Extracurricular Activities

Participation in athletics, clubs, and school events emerged as another consistent motivator. Students frequently described sports as a reason to maintain attendance, particularly when eligibility rules require regular participation and academic standing. Parents echoed these observations, often describing extracurricular involvement as a powerful source of accountability. One parent remarked: “If it wasn’t for sports, he would have a hard time going to school.” However, some parents also noted that in smaller districts, athletics may be the primary option available. This can limit engagement for students whose interests lie outside of sports, suggesting that broader programming may help strengthen attendance across a wider range of students.

“If there isn’t sports, there isn’t much else that makes you want to be there.”

Instructional Experiences and Engagement

Students expressed a strong preference for hands-on and project-based learning rather than lecture-heavy or textbook-centered instruction. This was especially evident in science courses. One student explained: “When I think of biology, I think of us doing experiments... I would like that way more than just going into the classroom and just sitting

down." Students in other districts shared similar views, suggesting that engaging classroom experiences can make attending school feel more worthwhile.

"I learn it better when we're actually doing something, not just listening."

Parents also pointed to instructional approach as an attendance-relevant factor: they described higher motivation when learning is hands-on or connected to authentic tasks, and lower motivation when instruction feels primarily lecture- or worksheet-based. Parents also highlighted the importance of consistent classroom routines and expectations.

Electives and Student Choice

Electives and specialized programs, including music, art, shop, FFA, woodshop, and personal finance, generated consistent enthusiasm. Students value opportunities to choose courses, pursue interests, and participate in unique experiences such as dual enrollment or student-led initiatives like one district's coffee and lemonade cart. These opportunities appear to strengthen students' investment in school by giving them a greater sense of ownership over their learning. Other students pointed to special events, activity days, field trips, and enrichment opportunities as experiences that give them something to anticipate.

"It's easier to go when you get to pick classes you actually care about."

Engaging Teachers

Positive relationships with engaging teachers consistently encouraged attendance. One district's English teacher was repeatedly praised: "I love engaging in his class. It's a really fun class, really laid back." Students across districts similarly valued educators who brought creativity, flexibility, and interaction into their classrooms. These findings reinforce the idea that students often experience instructional quality through relationships.

"When the teacher actually talks with you and makes it interesting, you want to show up."

C. Physical & Emotional Safety Perceptions

Student perceptions of safety reflect a mix of physical, emotional, and social factors that shape both their ability and willingness to attend school. Across districts and grade bands in both fall and spring focus groups, students generally described their schools as physically safe, often pointing to the familiarity and close relationships typical of smaller rural communities. However, physical safety was largely viewed as an expected condition rather than a reason to attend. Emotional well-being, by contrast, appeared to play a more direct role in day-to-day attendance decisions.

Physical Safety

Students overwhelmingly reported feeling physically secure at school. In both fall and spring groups, rural locations, smaller enrollments, and visible safety measures (e.g., locked doors and controlled access) contributed to this sense of protection. Students often contrasted their schools with larger settings and noted that small communities tend to have fewer safety concerns.

“I've never felt unsafe, like, physically... But I know that... a lot of people... feel unsafe with the way other kids act, just like things that they say and stuff.”

Yet many students indicated that safety alone does not increase their desire to attend. Instead, it functions as a basic expectation — something students assume will be present rather than a feature that actively draws them to school.

Emotional Safety and Social Climate

Unlike physical safety, emotional safety varied more across districts and was more likely to influence willingness to attend. Students clearly distinguished between physical danger and social discomfort, pointing to bullying (including cyberbullying), gossip, and peer conflict as concerns.

Student focus groups also surfaced the importance of adult follow-through in maintaining emotional safety. In some settings, students described how inconsistent discipline or lack of response to disruptive behavior can undermine trust in adults, making students feel less supported and less willing to attend even when they do not fear physical harm.

“It makes us lose a lot of trust... and not want to come to school as much because we keep having problems, and [staff]’s not doing anything about them.”

Overall, students view safety through a social lens. Even when physical risks are low, environments that feel socially tense, unpredictable, or unwelcoming may discourage attendance.

Summary

The findings indicate that attendance is influenced by a set of interconnected conditions related to student well-being, school climate, and engagement. Although students generally viewed their schools as physically safe, emotional safety and overall well-being appeared to have a greater impact on daily attendance decisions. Engagement emerged as a protective factor. Students were more likely to attend when learning felt interactive and relevant, when supportive relationships with peers and adults were present, and when opportunities existed to explore interests through electives and activities.

Conversely, experiences such as boredom, academic frustration, and social discomfort were associated with lower motivation. These patterns suggest that attendance is most stable in environments where students feel supported, connected, and challenged in appropriate ways. While students often focused on friendships and social experiences as key reasons for attending, parents placed more emphasis on responsibility, daily routines, and clear expectations at home. Overall, the results point to attendance as a reflection of school conditions as much as student behavior, underscoring the importance of creating environments that make attending both manageable and worthwhile.

IV. PARENT PERSPECTIVES ON THE IMPORTANCE OF ATTENDANCE

A. Parent and Staff Beliefs About Daily Attendance

The majority (77%) of parents indicated that they felt it was important for their student to attend school every day. However, 23% of parents responded that it is not or somewhat important to attend school daily, meaning just under a quarter consider it either unimportant or only somewhat important for their child to attend school every day.

Table 9. Parent Survey: Importance of Attendance

	Not – Somewhat Important	Neutral	Important – Very Important
How important do you think it is for your student to attend school every day? (n=154)	22.7%	0.6%	76.6%

With respect to the number of days that are acceptable to miss during the school year, the majority of parents (37%) indicated missing between 3 and 5 days of school per year is acceptable. The next largest proportion of parents felt that missing 6-8 days (31%) and 0-2 days (11%) during the school year was acceptable. Overall, 48% believe students should miss no more than five days a year.

Table 10. Parent Survey: Importance of Attendance

How many days of school do you think is okay to miss in a school year? (n=154)	N	%
0-2 days	17	11.0%
3-5 days	57	37.0%
6-8 days	47	30.5%
9-11 days	19	12.3%
12 or more days	14	9.1%

Among staff members that completed the attendance survey, nearly $\frac{3}{4}$ of staff indicated that they felt student attendance impacts academic performance “a great deal” and almost $\frac{1}{4}$ reported it impacts performance “somewhat.”

Table 11. Staff Survey: Academic Impact of Attendance

	Very little	Somewhat	A great deal
How much does student attendance impact academic performance in your area (n=324)	1.9%	24.4%	73.8%

A. Key Parent Insights on Student Attendance

Attendance as a Shared Responsibility

Focus group findings from parents consistently framed attendance as the result of multiple interacting influences rather than a single decision. Parents described how student needs, family expectations, peer relationships, and school climate work together to shape attendance patterns. Schools were viewed as most effective when they foster welcoming classrooms, provide diverse extracurricular opportunities, offer individualized academic support, and recognize student effort. At the same time, parents emphasized that school-based strategies are most successful when they reinforce, rather than replace, family commitment to education.

Developmental Differences in Attendance Motivation

Parents consistently observed that students' enthusiasm for school often changes across grade levels. Younger children were described as showing more consistent excitement about attending, frequently motivated by friendships, special activities, and predictable routines. In contrast, parents described middle and high school attendance as more sensitive to mood, developmental shifts, and competing responsibilities (including work and family obligations). Several parents emphasized that this is not always experienced as a "school quality" issue, but as a typical part of adolescence that requires different supports.

"For the first month to two months... and then he gets bored and he doesn't want to come to school... He did mention he'd like to be a little bit more challenged sometime."

The Role of School Size and Emotional Safety

Parents in smaller districts often emphasized the advantages of intimate learning environments, noting that visibility and personal connection foster both accountability and belonging. In one district, parents observed that "if one kid is gone, it's very apparent" and that students "feel very seen and known." At the same time, parents described how peer immaturity, teasing, and social conflict can make school feel exhausting for students who are more developmentally mature or socially sensitive, and when schools are small, this is more pronounced as there is "nowhere to hide."

Incentives

Across districts, extracurricular programming was described as a key support for regular attendance rather than simply an added benefit. Athletics were often described as a strong motivator tied to eligibility and team belonging. One parent explained, "She's a really great athlete and it's like, that's a huge thing in her world — gotta be at school, gotta keep your grades up, can't miss." For students who are not sports-identified, other options (e.g., robotics, drama, clubs, field trips, and enrichment) were described as essential. Parents also described meaningful roles and responsibilities at school—jobs, leadership tasks, and "ownership"—as a practical strategy for strengthening commitment to attendance. Recognition systems (attendance awards, trips, public celebrations) were viewed as influential, especially when they remain engaging over time and are accessible to a broad range of students.

Family Context and Limits of School-Based Influence

Parents consistently emphasized that family engagement and household routines shape attendance patterns. Participants described how consistent expectations, bedtimes, and morning routines support students' ability to attend regularly. Parents also highlighted barriers that are largely outside schools' control, including intergenerational patterns of low engagement, blended-family arrangements that create inconsistent expectations across households, and broader resource constraints. While parents valued school-based efforts to build belonging and engagement, many acknowledged that these efforts have limits when family support is inconsistent, underscoring the need for community partnership.

Summary

Across districts, parent perspectives frame attendance as a shared responsibility shaped by family expectations, relationships, and the school experience. Students are more likely to attend when families reinforce the importance of school, schools provide consistent and caring adults, students experience belonging, and learning feels engaging and relevant. When these conditions are misaligned, attendance challenges often reflect influences that extend beyond the school's direct control.

V. BARRIERS TO SCHOOL ATTENDANCE

Students were asked to report all the barriers that make it hard for them to attend school regularly via survey. Across both grade spans, the top reported barriers were feeling unmotivated or bored (37%), academic challenges (29%), and weather (26%). Feeling unmotivated or bored was specifically high for secondary students (41%) and elementary students also cited family responsibilities (45%) as a barrier to attendance.

Table 12. Student Survey: Barriers to Attendance

What barriers make it hard for you to attend school regularly? (n=1428, multi-select)*	Overall	Elementary	Secondary
Feeling unmotivated or bored	36.9%	24.9%	41.0%
Academic challenges (falling behind, etc.)	28.9%	43.2%	25.7%
Weather	26.3%	54.8%	19.1%
Family responsibilities	23.8%	45.2%	18.5%
Personal or emotional struggles	21.8%	34.9%	18.7%
Health or medical reasons	20.0%	30.9%	17.5%
I do not have any barriers	18.8%	--	24.4%
Lack of transportation	9.5%	18.9%	7.2%
Not feeling safe at school	8.8%	26.2%	4.2%
Other (please specify)*	4.7%	--	6.1%

*Other: Work, early school start time, lack of student support, lack of friends

Parents indicated that the most significant barriers to their student's school attendance were lack of motivation or boredom (29%), personal or emotional challenges (27%), and

health or medical issues (24%). The least significant barriers identified were weather (9%), lack of transportation (9%) and family responsibilities (7%).

Table 13. Parent Survey: Barriers to Attendance

To what extent do the following barriers make attendance difficult for your student?	Not-Somewhat Difficult	Neutral	Difficult – Very Difficult
Feeling unmotivated or bored (n=153)	54.9%	15.7%	29.4%
Personal or emotional struggles (n=153)	61.4%	11.8%	26.8%
Health or medical reasons (n=154)	57.1%	18.8%	24.0%
Not feeling safe at school (n=153)	68.6%	13.7%	17.6%
Academic Challenges (n=154)	70.8%	15.6%	13.6%
Weather (n=151)	79.5%	11.9%	8.6%
Lack of transportation (n=152)	85.5%	5.9%	8.6%
Family responsibilities (n=152)	76.3%	17.1%	6.6%
Other (please specify) (n=21)*	28.6%	57.1%	14.3%

*Other – Bullying, uninterested teachers, lack of recess supervision, family vacations, extracurricular activities, other travel.

Staff indicated that the most significant causes to student absences or tardies were home instability (65%), and lack of motivation/boredom (58%). The least significant causes identified were feeling unsafe at school (12%) and student work obligations (12%).

Table 14. Staff Survey: Barriers to Attendance

How often do the following cause student absences or tardiness?	Never-Sometimes	Often	Frequently-Chronically
Home instability (n=343)	16.3%	18.7%	65.0%
Lack of motivation/boredom (n=342)	19.3%	23.1%	57.6%
Personal/emotional struggles (n=342)	23.1%	24.6%	52.3%
Health/medical reasons issues (n=342)	21.9%	26.0%	52.0%
Family obligations (n=340)	33.2%	24.4%	42.4%
Transportation issues (n=343)	46.9%	14.6%	38.5%
Academic challenges (n=338)	42.6%	21.6%	35.8%
Weather (n=342)	69.3%	15.8%	14.9%
Feeling unsafe at school (n=338)	75.1%	12.4%	12.4%
Work obligations (for older students) (n=338)	73.1%	15.4%	11.5%
Other* (n=21)	33.3%	4.8%	61.9%

*Other: Lack of parent/Parent support, social media, lack of sleep, students experiencing homelessness.

Student and parent open-ended feedback from the surveys makes clear that barriers often reflect a combination of structural conditions, health needs, family circumstances, academic experiences, and school climate. While some obstacles fall outside school control, particularly those tied to geography and family context, both students and

parents emphasized that predictable routines, supportive environments, and responsive systems can help reduce their impact. The following shares additional insights from the qualitative data.

School Climate, Belonging, and Peer Dynamics

Students frequently connected attendance to whether school feels emotionally safe and socially supportive. References to bullying, peer “drama,” and feeling unwelcome suggest that belonging is not just a climate issue, but a practical driver of whether students feel able to show up consistently. In several groups, students described disengaging when conflict goes unaddressed or when they feel singled out by peers or adults.

“It just makes it hard to come to school. It’s just mentally draining dealing with bullying...”

Caregivers echoed these concerns, describing bullying and negative peer pressure as reasons students avoid school, particularly when students feel like outsiders in small communities.

“They feel outcast because they weren’t born in this town... there’s a lot of bullying based on not being a local”

Health, Mental Health, and Emotional Well-Being

Students widely viewed illness as a legitimate reason to miss school. Many reported staying home when seriously sick but attending when symptoms felt manageable, suggesting that attendance decisions are often weighed rather than automatic. As one student explained: “It’s just like, hard to want to come to school when your body doesn’t want you to.” Students also described how some attendance policies can inadvertently increase stress about missing school for legitimate health or therapy needs.

“There’s times we have to drive over an hour for any doctor appointment...”

Across districts, students also described the ways physical demands intersect with attendance. In spring groups, students discussed exhaustion tied to athletics and busy schedules (e.g., recovering after games while still needing to attend school and practice). This mirrors fall responses in which students described balancing feeling unwell with expectations tied to eligibility, academics, and family pressure.

“I would just say, like, after, like football games and like basketball games, it’s really hard to come to school because you play them and then you only get, like, one day to recover.”

Mental health challenges were consistently described as a more complex barrier than physical illness. Students referenced depression, anxiety, and feeling overwhelmed, and described taking “mental health days” when stress becomes unmanageable. Caregivers likewise described trauma and limited access to local supports as factors that can make sustained attendance difficult.

“If you have depression, it’s hard getting up in the morning.”

Spring discussions added stronger emphasis on seasonal impacts, particularly in mountain and rural communities where shorter days, cold weather, and limited sunlight

contribute to lower motivation. One student explained: “I get really slower during winter time. It’s just hard to get motivation for it.” Students also described mornings as especially difficult when it is cold and dark, even when their mood improves once they arrive and reconnect with peers.

“I think, since it’s cold now, I think having to get up at 6:30 in the morning, it’s kind of a struggle getting out of bed and especially going outside in the cold. But once you get to school... it just gives you a lot of motivation.”

Together, these findings suggest that emotional readiness is closely tied to attendance. When students feel overwhelmed or emotionally exhausted, attending school may require more energy than they feel they have available.

Chronic Boredom as a Risk to Attendance

Boredom emerged as a recurring concern in both fall and spring focus groups. Students in one district described daily routines as repetitive with “nothing to look forward to,” while a student from another district admitted: “I never want to go to school unless it’s like a fun day.” Other students similarly noted declining school pride and fewer engaging traditions. When students struggle to anticipate something meaningful in their day, attending school may feel less urgent, particularly when other barriers are present.

“It’s the same thing every day—there’s nothing to look forward to.”

Academic Momentum and Instructional Pacing

Many students reported attending to avoid falling behind, yet once they do fall behind, returning can feel overwhelming. Staff turnover also contributed to feelings of academic unpreparedness, with some students reporting they felt “blindsided by material.” Students also recognized that academic difficulty varies from person to person; some students struggle while others may feel insufficiently challenged. Both, however, can lead to disengagement.

“Some of us need more help, and some of us need more challenge—it’s not the same for everybody.”

Similarly, parents described academic engagement as uneven across student populations. Some students thrived when challenged or deeply interested in particular subjects, while others disengaged when coursework felt insufficiently demanding, overly difficult, or disconnected from their interests.

Fatigue, Sleep, and Daily Schedules

Lack of sleep was discussed as a significant barrier across both student and parent conversations. Students frequently described being “always tired,” struggling to wake up, and feeling burned out by the demands of balancing school, sports, work, and home responsibilities. One student shared: “I often can’t wake up in the mornings... I lack the motivation and energy to try and make it here on time.” Early start times and long commutes appear to intensify this fatigue.

Caregivers emphasized that attendance improves when families can sustain consistent bedtimes and morning routines, and they linked late-night device use and unstable

home schedules to missed school. Parents repeatedly framed school structure as a stabilizing force, especially for students who do not experience predictable routines at home.

Transportation, Distance, and Weather

Transportation and weather-related barriers remained among the most consistently reported structural challenges. Long commutes, dangerous winter roads, and unreliable routes can make getting to school difficult even for motivated students. In some communities, families described missed days driven by whether buses can safely run, while students described icy conditions and limited alternatives when rides fall through.

“the drive in the winter... [our car] was sliding everywhere... it's an ice rink”

Parent perspectives reinforced these patterns and highlighted how distance also magnifies other barriers. Families noted that medical appointments, childcare needs, and transportation breakdowns can quickly turn into full-day absences when travel time is significant.

Survey data reflect this mixed picture: About 75% of students reported that it is easy for them to get to school every day or almost every day. However, 9% of students responded that it is never or rarely easy to get to school, indicating that a considerable portion of students may need improved access to transportation to school in order to maintain attendance.

Table 15. Student Survey: Transportation to School

	Never- Rarely	Some days	Every day – Almost Every day
Is it easy for you to get to school each day? (n=1391)	8.8%	16.6%	74.6%

Family Responsibilities and Home Context

Students described some absences as driven by family emergencies, caregiving responsibilities, and competing responsibilities at home. Caregivers emphasized that inconsistent expectations, blended household logistics, and limited supervision can make it hard to sustain daily attendance, even when families value school.

Summary

Across student and caregiver surveys and focus groups, attendance barriers appear to accumulate rather than operate in isolation. Structural challenges such as transportation, weather, and travel for healthcare interact with sleep, health, stress, academic experiences, and family context to shape students' capacity to attend.

Parents consistently emphasized that predictable schedules, consistent expectations, and reliable adult presence can buffer many barriers. Students' feedback reinforced that schools play a critical role in whether attendance feels manageable and worthwhile, especially through relationships, emotional safety, and learning environments that feel engaging and respectful.

Overall, the findings point toward the importance of comprehensive approaches that address logistical access, strengthen school climate, support student well-being, and promote engaging learning experiences. When these conditions are in place, barriers may become less decisive in shaping attendance patterns.

VI. SUGGESTIONS TO IMPROVE ATTENDANCE

A. Supports That Help Students Attend When Motivation Is Low

Students identified several supports that make it easier to attend even on days when motivation is limited. Notably, most students emphasized that being with friends, having something enjoyable or meaningful to look forward to, and support from parents/guardians all help them attend, even when motivation is low. Parents reported that the most helpful support is from parents or guardians with morning routines (92%), giving students responsibility at school (89%), having a specific goal or reason to attend (87%), seeing friends (86%) and support from teachers (86%). Staff believed that seeing friends (92%) was the most helpful factor. Staff also indicated that encouragement from teachers/staff (83%) and parental support (79%) were helpful factors for unmotivated students.

Table 16. Student Survey: Motivation to Attend School

<i>What helps you attend school when you're feeling unmotivated?</i>	Not-Somewhat Helpful	Neutral	Helpful – Very Helpful
Being with my friends (n=1391)	9.9%	15.5%	74.6%
Having a specific goal or reason to attend (e.g., graduation, sports, projects) (n=1401)	12.6%	20.2%	67.2%
Support from my parents or guardians (e.g., help with morning routines) (n=1404)	21.9%	22.9%	55.3%
Having responsibility at school (n=1391)	19.6%	31.1%	49.3%
Encouragement from my teachers or school staff (n=1399)	25.6%	31.2%	43.2%
A reward or incentive for attending regularly (n=1390)	27.1%	31.9%	41.0%
Talking to a counselor or mentor (n=1396)	35.2%	32.2%	32.6%
Other (please specify) (n=347)*	28.0%	32.9%	39.2%

*Other – Friends and social life, engaging experiences, supportive staff, school as a safe space, lunch, preparing for future, and external pressure or requirements.

Table 17. Parent Survey: Motivation to Attend School

<i>What supports help your student(s) attend school when they're feeling unmotivated?</i>	Not-Somewhat Helpful	Neutral	Helpful – Very Helpful
Support from my parents or guardians (e.g., help with morning routines) (n=154)	4.5%	3.2%	92.2%
Having responsibility at school (n=152)	2.0%	9.2%	88.8%
Having a specific goal or reason to attend (e.g., graduation, sports, projects) (n=153)	3.9%	9.2%	86.9%
Seeing friends (n=154)	3.2%	10.4%	86.4%
Encouragement from my teachers or school staff (n=153)	7.2%	6.5%	86.3%
Earning rewards for regular attendance (n=154)	14.9%	23.4%	61.7%
Talking to a counselor or mentor (n=154)	18.2%	39.6%	42.2%
Other (please specify) (n=21)*	14.3%	52.4%	33.3%

*Group projects or activities, administrative support

Table 18. Staff Survey: Important Factors for Unmotivated Students

<i>What supports help unmotivated students attend?</i>	Not-Somewhat helpful	Neutral	Helpful-Very helpful
Seeing friends (n=341)	2.6%	5.6%	91.8%
Encouragement from teachers/staff (n=341)	7.3%	10.0%	82.7%
Parental support (n=339)	9.1%	11.8%	79.1%
Clear personal goals (graduation, sports, etc.) (n=341)	8.5%	15.5%	76.0%
Having a purpose or responsibility at school (n=340)	9.1%	21.2%	69.7%
Talking to a counselor/mentor (n=340)	8.8%	23.2%	67.9%
Incentives or rewards for attendance (n=340)	13.8%	22.1%	64.1%
Other* (n=27)	3.7%	37.0%	59.3%

*Other: Sports participation, law enforcement/CPS support, community/cultural activities, other program participation, severe consequences, adult support, healthcare access.

These findings were also reflected in open-ended survey feedback. When motivation is low, students and parents believe strong social and relational pulls can help students attend. Students emphasized that even if mornings feel emotionally heavy (stress, anxiety, depression, or seasonal low energy), having routines and concrete supports such as rides, flexible check-ins, a calm space, and reassurance that they can start the day slowly, make it easier to show up and stay. Parents similarly pointed to consistent expectations paired with empathy: clear encouragement to attend, practical help removing barriers (sleep, transportation, health appointments), and responsive school follow-through on bullying or disruptions so school feels emotionally safe. While safety and

basic stability are seen as prerequisites, relationships, belonging, and predictable support are what most often tip the decision toward coming to school.

B. Suggestions for Improvement

When asked what would help their students attend school more regularly, the largest proportion of parents identified a curriculum that is relevant and aligned to students' interests and future career goals (45%), along with programs that make school more enjoyable (41%).

Table 19. Parent Survey: Suggestions for Improvement

What would help your student(s) attend school more regularly? (Check all that apply.)*	N	%
Relevant curriculum aligned to student interests/future career aspirations	90	45.2%
Programs that make school more enjoyable (e.g. clubs, activities)	81	40.7%
Allowing students to have a say in their learning (student voice and choice)	67	33.7%
Student incentives for meeting an attendance goal	55	27.6%
Physically and emotionally safe/supportive school climate	55	27.6%
Personal attention (e.g. one-on-one time with teachers or mentors)	51	25.6%
Availability of mental wellness supports (e.g. counseling, mental health services)	43	21.6%
Availability of targeted interventions for students who may be struggling	43	21.6%
Parent/Guardian involvement and support	38	19.1%
Flexible or supportive transportation options	23	11.6%
Unsure	14	7.0%
Other* (please specify):	20	10.1%

*Other – Allowing students to miss school for doctors appointments, offering an advanced make-up curriculum, addressing bullying, offering classes tailored to student interests, having responsibilities at school, staying healthy, offering separate classes for advanced students and behavioral intervention students.

When staff were asked what would be helpful for improving attendance, the most common response was parent involvement (86%), along with engaging extracurricular programs (79%), and mental health supports (74%).

Table 20. Staff Survey: Important Factors for Improving Attendance

How helpful are the following supports for improving attendance?	Not-Somewhat helpful	Neutral	Helpful-Very helpful
Parent/Parent involvement (n=344)	7.0%	7.6%	85.5%
Engaging extracurricular programs (n=344)	6.7%	14.8%	78.5%

How helpful are the following supports for improving attendance?	Not-Somewhat helpful	Neutral	Helpful-Very helpful
Mental health supports (n=344)	9.0%	16.6%	74.4%
One-on-one attention/mentoring (n=342)	12.3%	21.9%	65.8%
Relevant curriculum aligned to their interests (n=344)	8.7%	25.6%	65.7%
Community outreach/engagement (n=343)	14.9%	19.5%	65.6%
Attendance incentives (n=343)	14.6%	23.0%	62.4%
Flexible transportation options (n=344)	16.6%	25.3%	58.1%
Attendance monitoring systems (n=344)	20.3%	25.6%	54.1%
Other* (n=15)	13.3%	46.7%	40.0%

*Other: Healthcare access, food/nutrition support, monetary incentives, severe consequences.

In sum, according to parents and school staff, improving attendance may depend less on isolated interventions and more on strengthening the conditions that make school a place students feel connected to, challenged by, and motivated to attend.

The following provides additional details from parent and student focus groups on how attendance can be improved. While many recommendations focused on classroom practices and school climate, others highlighted the role of scheduling, policies, communication, and basic conditions in shaping students' willingness and ability to attend.

“If school felt like it was made for us, it would be easier to show up.”

Engaging Instruction and Student Voice

Students consistently called for more hands-on, project-based learning and greater opportunities to shape their educational experiences. Many expressed frustration with instruction that relies heavily on textbooks, note-taking, or videos, and instead advocated for interactive lessons, field trips, and real-world applications. Students in several districts also emphasized the importance of choice, from selecting assignment topics to choosing partners for group work, noting that autonomy increases both engagement and effort.

“We learn more when we actually do something — not just watch a video and take notes.”

Expanding Activities and Enrichment

Students repeatedly emphasized the importance of extracurricular opportunities and school spirit. Requests included restoring music programs, adding clubs, increasing assemblies, and offering more activities during the school day rather than only after school. In some groups, students described schools as lacking energy or pride and wanted more opportunities for celebration, connection, and recognition. Others pointed to programs they already enjoyed (such as swimming, board game sessions, and family events) as reasons they look forward to attending.

“When there’s nothing to look forward to, it’s hard to want to be here.”

Parents expressed similar views, advocating for expanded enrichment beyond athletics. Suggested additions included drama, robotics, journalism, art, and trade-based programs. Caregivers across districts observed that when students have multiple pathways to participate, they are more likely to develop a sense of ownership and connection to their school.

“Not every kid is an athlete; they still need something that makes them feel like they belong.”

Scheduling, Workload, and Use of Time

Students across multiple districts described daily schedules as an area where adjustments could better support attendance. Requests included later start times, shorter days, early-release options, and more time between classes. Some students connected long or tightly structured days directly to fatigue and stress, suggesting that the organization of the school day can influence readiness to attend.

Lunch periods were another recurring concern. Students in some districts reported limited time to eat due to scheduling demands, while students in other districts described difficulty balancing attendance with medical appointments that require significant travel. These comments suggest that greater flexibility may help reduce avoidable absences, particularly in rural communities.

“If you’re late once, it turns into a whole thing... Sometimes it feels like it’s not even worth coming in.”

Parents did not focus as heavily on daily schedules but echoed the importance of predictable routines. Many noted that students benefit from clear expectations and consistent structures that help establish attendance as a habit.

Relationships, Climate, and Emotional Support

As previously noted, students and caregivers emphasized that strong relationships with adults are central to improving attendance. Students described valuing teachers who listen, maintain confidentiality, and address concerns calmly rather than through immediate punishment. Others requested more supportive responses when they ask for academic help. At the same time, some students identified behaviors such as yelling, inconsistent discipline, or limited follow-through on disruptions that reduce trust. These experiences indicate that how adults respond to challenges can shape students' sense of safety and belonging.

Caregivers similarly stressed the importance of consistent, caring adults who help students build resilience and feel valued. Several suggested ensuring that every student has at least one trusted adult they can turn to during difficult moments.

“If a student doesn’t feel seen, attendance becomes the first thing to slip.”

Meeting Basic Needs and Improving Physical Conditions

Students also identified practical improvements that could make school more comfortable and supportive. Requests included better food quality, access to snacks,

improved heating and cooling systems, and cleaner bathrooms. Some students described sensory challenges, such as loud classroom environments, while others asked to bring comfort items. Although these concerns may seem operational, they influence whether students feel physically at ease in the building.

Caregivers echoed several of these points, noting that food options, communication practices, and responsiveness to illness all shape students' daily experience. One parent shared, "When basic needs aren't met, families are making hard choices before the day even starts."

Flexibility in Policies and Expectations

Students raised concerns about attendance and grading policies they perceived as overly rigid. Examples included strict deadlines for missed work, narrow definitions of excused absences, and disciplinary responses to tardiness. Many expressed a desire for greater understanding when health issues, transportation challenges, or family circumstances interfere with attendance.

"Sometimes stuff happens at home and it's not in our control, but it still feels like we're punished for it."

Parents offered varied perspectives on accountability. Some supported stronger expectations for chronic absenteeism, while others cautioned that inflexible policies may unintentionally disadvantage students managing complex responsibilities.

Communication, Partnerships, and Community Context

Several caregivers identified communication gaps between schools and families, particularly when relying solely on digital platforms that may not reach all households. Others recommended building partnerships with local businesses and organizations to expand opportunities for field trips, incentives, and career exploration. Participants also noted that geographic isolation can make it difficult to access specialized services and enrichment, as travel demands are significant in many communities. Strengthening communication practices and community partnerships was frequently described as a practical way to reduce barriers and make attendance feel more attainable.

VII. CONCLUSION

Synthesizing findings across sections, the study highlights several cross-cutting insights. First, attendance is strongest where students experience a sense of connection—to peers, to caring adults, and to meaningful roles and activities in school—and where emotional safety is actively maintained through consistent adult follow-through on bullying and other climate issues. Second, student physical and emotional well-being plays a central role in readiness to attend, particularly in rural contexts where accessing health and behavioral health services can require significant time away from school.

Third, engagement in learning functions as a protective factor: schools with hands-on instruction, relevant curriculum, and varied extracurricular and enrichment opportunities are better positioned to sustain regular attendance, especially among older students. Fourth, structural conditions such as transportation, distance, weather, and scheduling

can either buffer or exacerbate attendance challenges, and deserve consideration alongside student-focused interventions. Finally, families and schools see attendance as a shared responsibility and emphasize that improvements will depend less on single programs and more on strengthening the overall school experience, including policy clarity and fairness, supportive relationships, engaging instruction, attention to basic needs, and coordinated supports that reduce friction when students miss time for legitimate reasons.

For the state, these findings point toward a comprehensive approach to attendance that pairs policy guidance with support for implementation: promoting clear and equitable attendance policies, investing in climate and engagement strategies, supporting mental health and family partnerships, and aligning transportation and scheduling decisions with attendance goals. Together, these actions can help ensure that attendance is not just an individual expectation, but the natural result of schools that are accessible, welcoming, and meaningful in students' daily lives.

APPENDIX A: FOCUS GROUP SUMMARIES BY DISTRICT

The following sections provide a summary of key findings from student and parent focus groups from each district.

School B

Key takeaways from School B included the following:

- **Social Connections as Primary Attendance Driver:** Peer relationships are the strongest motivator for school attendance, with sports teams creating "family" experiences that transform attendance patterns.
- **Parental Expectations Trump School-Based Factors:** Attendance is primarily determined by home expectations rather than school interventions, with chronic absenteeism linked to uninvolved parents—a generational pattern in the community.
- **Loss of Engaging Programs and Teaching Approaches:** Students and parents both expressed disappointment about eliminating project-based learning and the music program, which served as stress relievers and daily motivators.
- **Impact of School Leadership and Culture on Trust:** Recent improvements in leadership and staff quality have been transformative, though students lose trust when adults fail to follow through on promises to address behavioral issues.
- **Seasonal and Mental Health Challenges in Rural Mountain Setting:** Winter conditions, early darkness, and dangerous roads compound mental health struggles and create substantial attendance barriers.
- **Small School Benefits and Limitations:** Students feel physically safe due to the school's size and isolation, but constant exposure to the same peers becomes tiresome for mature students.

Physical & Emotional Health and Safety Perceptions

In School B, mental health emerged as a critical attendance barrier, especially during winter months when students struggle with early mornings, cold weather, and limited sunlight. As one student explained, "It's not really about health. It's more about mental [health]. I get really slower during winter time. It's just hard to get motivation for it." Emotional safety is compromised when adults fail to address behavioral issues, with students sharing an experience of losing trust when promises go unfulfilled: "It makes us lose a lot of trust for her and not want to come to school as much, because we keep having problems, and she's not doing anything about them." Due to its small size and isolated location, students universally feel physically safe at school ("We have a really small school. We're pretty alienated, compared to Superior, Hellgate, any bigger school," according to one student). However, constant exposure to the same peers becomes emotionally draining for more mature students, as parents noted that being "with the same kids constantly for nine hours straight... does get tiresome."

Engagement & Enjoyment for School

Both students and parents expressed significant concern about the loss of engaging programs, particularly project-based learning and music. One student explained that "We did project-based learning for like, three years, and the two teachers that were carrying that left, and so now it's just like, back to the way it went before." Another student shared, "When I think of biology, I think of us doing experiments like every day... I would like that way more than just going into the classroom and just sitting down." Parents supported this, noting that their children thrive with hands-on learning and expressing disappointment about the loss of project-based approaches.

The elimination of the band program was also especially impactful, with one student emphasizing, "Music. I wish we had the band program still. Yeah, that's another thing I love looking forward to every day. And that was a big stress reliever." Parents confirmed that music provided an "escape" for students in the arts, who now have "nothing to choose from." In general, students expressed a desire for more electives to choose from. On a positive note, students particularly enjoyed English class due to an engaging teacher, revealing the importance of relationship building between students and staff. Parents similarly noted that sports programs significantly boost engagement and provide purpose for many students. "If it wasn't for sports, he would have a hard time going to school," one parent shared.

Motivation to Attend School

According to Parents, attendance in School B is primarily driven by parental expectations rather than school-based factors, with one parent stating, "I go to work every day, you can go to school every day. Period." Parents observed that chronic absenteeism is linked to uninvolved parenting, noting "the kids that don't come to school regularly have very uninvolved parents. And it shows both in their attendance and then their behavior when they do come to school." Social connections emerged as the strongest school-based motivator, with students emphasizing, "If I didn't have such close friends at the school, I wouldn't want to come to school. That's like my biggest thing." Sports and other extracurriculars also significantly boost motivation, creating "family" experiences that transform attendance patterns and provide academic accountability through eligibility requirements. While engaging teachers and subjects provide additional motivation, many students acknowledged limited intrinsic motivation, with one admitting, "Nothing gives me really motivation to go here. Really, just I have to. If I don't, then I have to do homework."

Barriers to Attendance

Attendance barriers in School B include dangerous winter driving conditions and seasonal mental health challenges from early wake times, cold weather, and limited sunlight. Parents confirmed that while transportation itself isn't a barrier (buses run reliably with weather delays), the winter conditions compound other attendance challenges. However, Parents believed that the primary barrier to attendance was unengaged parents. One parent cited an intergenerational pattern where families face "substance abuse, domestic issues, and lack of basic routines." Students lose trust and motivation when adults fail to address behavioral problems, particularly regarding a disruptive peer,

while physical health issues and limited sports recovery time also negatively affect attendance.

Suggestions for Improvement

Students and parents in School B identified several key improvements needed to boost engagement and attendance. Students suggested possible schedule modifications, including a four-day school week or later Friday start times during winter, and significantly more hands-on learning with science experiments, lab activities, and field trips. Critical to building trust is consistent discipline and follow-through from administrators and teachers on behavioral concerns. Both groups recognized the need for better academic differentiation to challenge advanced students while supporting those who struggle. Parents emphasized increasing parental involvement and accountability, noting that "the kids that don't come to school regularly have very uninvolved parents" and that addressing home environments is essential for meaningful change. Finally, maintaining and expanding sports and extracurricular opportunities is crucial, as these provide critical motivation and social connection, while continued focus on hiring engaging teachers who build positive relationships remains important.

School P

Key findings included:

- **Belonging and emotional safety are central to attendance.** Students described bullying, cliques, rumors, and a lack of follow-through as "mentally draining," with serious mental health impacts. *"It's just mentally draining dealing with bullying..."; "I... almost killed myself because the bullying... And nothing was done..."*
- **Trust in adults depends on confidentiality and consistent follow-through.** Students said there may be "one" trusted adult, but many fear concerns won't be acted on and that private information will spread. *"There's one, but the rest of them... I just don't feel like anything would... follow through..."; "When you tell somebody, they probably will tell everybody..."*
- **Attendance policies can feel punitive or inequitable (and may backfire).** Students described participation points and required "articles/essays" for missed classes as increasing stress and encouraging sick attendance. *"We're punished to come to school... [we] have to write an article for every single class we miss."* Parents also emphasized the need for clearer, consistent rules—especially around excused vs. unexcused absences. *"What's considered excused and what's unexcused?"*
- **Engagement is highest in hands-on, supportive, and relevant learning.** Students repeatedly named shop/welding, art, labs/science, FFA, sports, and caring teachers as reasons to attend. *"I personally like... shop..."; "Science... she cares..."* Parents similarly pointed to relevant pathways (work study/internships) as a lever for attendance.
- **Logistics in a rural context create real barriers.** Both groups raised long travel for medical appointments and transportation gaps; students also described weather decisions and bus-route limits. Parents: *"Driving an hour... that's probably the*

biggest conflict..." Students: "We have to drive over an hour for any doctors appointment..."

- **Family expectations and routines matter—yet school conditions still strongly shape daily willingness to attend.** Parents often framed attendance as a "non-negotiable" set at home. *"It's not an option, so they go, right?"* Students highlighted that even when families value school, bullying, policy stressors, and access issues can undermine attendance.

Physical & Emotional Health and Safety Perceptions

Students said physical safety was generally "okay," but emotional safety was fragile and closely tied to bullying and belonging; as one put it, *"Yeah... I know... I'm not gonna be stabbed... but your mental health,"* and students repeatedly linked bullying, harassment, and exclusion to absences and distress (*"It just makes it hard to come to school... dealing with bullying..."*). They also described wanting supports that reduce stress without stigma (e.g., spaces to calm down and respected mental health days) alongside consistent adult response, noting, *"If you take [a mental health day], you're immediately... criticized for it."* Parents similarly raised bullying and supervision concerns and expressed frustration when issues aren't addressed (*"Why aren't these kids want to come to school when they're getting bullied, constantly harassed..."*), calling for increased supervision and fair responses when conflict escalates (*"A kid finally gets fed up and retaliates, then they're the one that's in trouble."*).

Engagement & Enjoyment for School

Parents described attendance as primarily a home responsibility and expectation (*"You can't. It's up to the parents.";* *"It's not an option, so they go, right?"*), while students' day-to-day enjoyment of school was strongly linked to hands-on classes, electives, and teachers who are kind, flexible, and responsive (especially shop/welding, art, sports, FFA, and science labs: *"Art class... and I do college welding.";* *"Science... she cares..."*). Students also noted that boredom and perceived low rigor can reduce motivation and contribute to skipping specific classes (*"There's someone... [who] will miss her first two periods... because it is so boring."*), alongside worries about readiness for college (*"I'm scared to go to college... I'm still relearning things..."*).

Motivation to Attend School

Students described motivation as coming most often from relationships (friends), activities/extracurriculars (sports, FFA), and specific programs (welding, art), as well as the desire to avoid academic consequences like falling behind (*"Mostly sports..."*; *"Mostly to keep up on the work..."*). Some students also shared that school can feel safer than home, which further motivates attendance (*"I feel like safer [at school] than home."*). Parents framed motivation as connected to peer relationships and whether students feel supported academically, noting that recognition can help but is not sufficient on its own (*"It's not the incentive that gets them here. That's a perk..."*; *"Sometimes it is nice to be recognized."*).

Barriers to Attendance

Across both groups, the most emotionally charged barriers centered on mental health and bullying, especially the feeling that reporting concerns does not lead to change (*"You could bring it to them... and... nothing's ever been done."*). Students and parents also described policy-related barriers and perceived unfairness, including penalties tied to documented medical needs and make-up "articles," which can increase stress and encourage students to attend while sick (*"It... makes it so kids come to school sick..."*), alongside parent calls for clearer, more consistent rules (*"We have to have some consistency..."*). Structural barriers were amplified by rural access issues—long travel for appointments, limited bus routes, and weather/road conditions (Parents: *"Driving an hour... that's probably the biggest conflict..."*; Students: *"No bus goes down..."*)—and some students additionally noted basic needs like food access as both a draw and a point of concern about quality/consistency (*"They come because of food..."*).

Suggestions for Improvement

Suggestions focused first on strengthening anti-bullying response and adult follow-through through consistent enforcement, increased supervision, and trusted reporting pathways that protect confidentiality (*"They should have supervision in the hall."*; *"Not talking about your disability out in public..."*). Participants also called for attendance-related policies that are fair, transparent, and health-supportive—revisiting participation-point penalties and "article/essay" make-up requirements, distinguishing documented appointments, and reducing incentives to attend while sick (*"Try and get rid of the stupid article things."*; *"What's considered excused and what's unexcused?"*). Students and parents emphasized increasing engaging, relevant learning options by expanding electives (arts/music/theater), hands-on pathways, tutoring/extra help, and internships/work study that can count for credit (*"I really wish we had more electives..."*; *"Having an opportunity to work... versus filling time."*), alongside improving communication and academic support so students can access assignments when absent, see timelier grading, and experience more respectful help-seeking (*"Teachers need... to communicate better about work..."*; *"For starters, they could not laugh at us when we get help..."*). Finally, they recommended addressing rural logistics proactively through scheduling solutions for appointments, transportation/car-pool flexibility (within safety constraints), and clearer weather/closure decision rules to reduce inequities for out-of-town students.

School G

Parent and student responses revealed the following key insights:

- **Relationships drive attendance.** Students and parents repeatedly tied showing up to feeling connected to friends and at least one trusted adult at school. When trust with a teacher breaks or students don't have an "adult champion," avoidance increases. (*"Half the students said they don't currently have an adult that they feel safe with at school."* / *"The majority of kids have an 'adult champion' but some kids don't."*)
- **Engagement matters—and boredom is a real attendance risk.** Both groups said students disengage when learning feels repetitive, note-heavy, or disconnected

from real life. ("They are bored." / "They wish they had more hands-on learning and projects instead of taking so many notes.")

- **Mental health, stress, and shame are central barriers.** Students described anxiety spikes when grades drop; parents described depression, grief, and limited mental health supports. ("They don't want to come...when they see a failing grade...because...they think they are failures." / "Depression in kids and kids are constantly grieving.")
- **Safety and climate issues show up differently by group, but both point to the need for consistent supports.** Parents emphasized bullying and classroom disruptions; students generally reported feeling safe and noted bullying has improved, citing building security and the cell phone policy. ("Bullies are a huge problem." / "They said they overall feel really safe.")
- **Consistency and follow-through build credibility.** Both groups emphasized that inconsistent incentives and "sloppy" follow-through reduce motivation and trust in school systems. ("Rewards have been wishy washy." / "This reward system...has been sloppy and inconsistent.")
- **Relevance + future pathways can re-engage students, especially before grades 8–9.** Parents and students connected attendance to graduation, pride, and future jobs, and asked for clearer career exposure and practical skills. ("Start getting it in kids head how important school is..." / "They want to graduate...walk the stage...make their family proud.")

Physical & Emotional Health and Safety Perceptions

Students and parents described mental and emotional health as a primary driver of whether students can attend. Students said anxiety and shame—especially when grades fall—can lead to avoidance, noting that "seeing a failing grade...[makes them] think they are failures," and suggested delaying grade posting or building in more recovery time to reduce spirals. Parents echoed that mental health needs are high, referencing "depression...constantly grieving," and called for more trained mental health support and regular check-ins with trusted adults. On safety, students generally reported feeling safe—helped by being a small school where "knowing everyone helps," plus security changes and the cell phone policy—while parents emphasized bullying (including social media) and feared retaliation when reporting, pointing to the need for consistent, credible reporting and response systems that protect students.

Engagement & Enjoyment for School

Across groups, engagement and perceived value of school strongly shaped attendance: students said they're more likely to come when learning is "interesting and fun" and less likely when it's repetitive or overly note-based, while parents described students calling school a "waste of time" and wanting more "real life scenarios" and practical relevance. Both groups highlighted sports and activities as key sources of enjoyment and belonging, and families asked for more electives, clubs, field trips, and enrichment to reduce boredom. Parents also emphasized building a culture of

attendance early and consistently—helping students understand what education “unlocks” before disengagement grows in grades 8–9—so that attendance expectations are paired with meaningful purpose and positive school experiences.

Motivation to Attend School

Motivation was described as both relational and goal-oriented: students repeatedly tied attendance to friends, sports eligibility, graduation pride, and making family proud (“They want to graduate...walk the stage...make their family proud”), while parents emphasized that friendships and supportive teachers can pull students in even when academics feel hard. Students noted that when adults they trust “put them in a good mood,” it can improve attendance over time, but losing trust with a teacher can make students avoid that class (and sometimes school). Parents also described motivation increasing when school provides visible recognition, engaging options, and clearer future pathways, and decreasing when students feel disconnected, unsafe, or unsure why school matters.

Barriers to Attendance

Barriers were a mix of practical hurdles and deeper stressors. Students described waking up early and getting out of bed as “the hardest thing,” especially when parents can’t help them get up; missing the bus can cascade into missing practice and further reduce motivation. Students and parents both cited stress about grades and falling behind, plus responsibilities at home—particularly older students caring for siblings. Parents added broader home/community challenges such as “drugs and alcohol,” limited supervision, weak routines, and difficulty setting boundaries around electronics and sleep, alongside school-side barriers like classroom disruptions, inconsistent family communication, and outdated contact information that complicates attendance notifications and outreach.

Suggestions for Improvement

Recommendations centered on relationships, relevance, and reliable systems. Families and students asked for more trusted-adult check-ins, stronger advisory/mentoring, and strength-based approaches that prioritize kindness and positive reinforcement rather than group punishment. Both groups wanted engaging, hands-on learning—more projects, electives (e.g., FFA, FCCLA, drama, speech/debate, languages), and career exposure like job shadowing and community role models—so school feels connected to “real life” and future goals. Students also wanted consistent follow-through on incentives and traditions (e.g., events, rewards tied to attendance/grades), and supportive structures such as calm spaces to decompress and “support Fridays” or dedicated catch-up time when school is missed. Parents emphasized improving two-way communication and making attendance supports more dependable (automated notifications, accurate contacts), while also expanding cultural supports (elders, smudging, language and culture learning) to strengthen belonging and purpose.

School J

Key findings from focus groups included the following:

- **Mental health and academic stress are major drivers of absences.** Students described using “mental health days” when school feels overwhelming, especially due to “assignments” and grading pressure: “I feel like overwhelmed with schoolwork... take a day off to... relax.”
- **Feeling safe is necessary, but trust in adults is what makes safety “real.”** While many said “I feel pretty safe,” others referenced ongoing threats and recent incidents; multiple students connected safety to relationships: “Honestly, having a teacher you can trust.”
- **Engagement, belonging, and school culture increase attendance.** Students repeatedly named sports, assemblies, competitions, and electives as reasons it’s “harder to miss,” and highlighted specific fun/identity-building examples (e.g., “pie a teacher in the face” at an assembly; cheerleading returning).
- **Incentives and clear “payoffs” matter—especially for older students.** The ability to skip finals (tied to grades/attendance) is a strong motivator; smaller reward systems (e.g., Positive Paws → gift cards) also provide a push.
- **Policies can either build buy-in or erode it.** Students described frustration with strict/inconsistent enforcement (phones/ISS), make-up work penalties, and experiences of public embarrassment (e.g., bright green “failing” slips), which can reduce motivation and connection.
- **Structural barriers still disrupt attendance.** Weather and transportation (“rides,” long distances) and family responsibilities (e.g., dropping off siblings) can keep students out or make them late, especially when school remains open without remote options.

Physical & Emotional Health and Safety Perceptions

Students described physical illness and mental health as intertwined with attendance, with “mental health days” commonly used to cope with burnout from schoolwork and pressure: “A lot of my friends will take mental health days throughout the week.” Many reported generally feeling safe at school—often citing security measures and adult responsiveness—yet they also referenced ongoing threats and past/nearby incidents (“There’s a lot of threats”; “There was a shooting last week...”). Across both safety and wellbeing, students emphasized that having a trusted adult is key: “Honestly, having a teacher you can trust.”

Engagement & Enjoyment for School

Students said they are more likely to attend when school is engaging, social, and has things to look forward to—assemblies, competitions, spirit activities, and hands-on classes. They named activities and fun culture as concrete attendance boosters (“Student council... [is] trying to pie a teacher in the face”), and cited electives/labs as reasons not to miss (“I don’t want to miss... a lab in chemistry”). In contrast, boredom and overload (too much note-taking, too much computer use, daily assignments) make absences feel easier. Students also linked attendance to practical importance: missing school increases

stress about make-up work and penalties, making it feel like a cycle that can be hard to break.

Motivation to Attend School

Motivation is driven by relationships, belonging, and incentives. Students most often cited friends and social connection ("Seeing other people"), sports/activities, and elective pathways as reasons to come. For older students, the ability to skip finals is a major incentive tied to attendance and grades, while families also provide external structure ("My parents won't let me skip"). Students described wanting school to feel more relevant to future goals, suggesting that when learning feels meaningful and adults show care, motivation increases.

Barriers to Attendance

Barriers include stress and workload, but also non-school factors like weather and transportation ("Weather... Rides... A lot of people live very far"), and family responsibilities such as dropping off siblings. Students described frustration when buses can't run but school remains open, leaving some students absent and then behind with no consistent remote option. Policy-related barriers also emerged, including strict phone enforcement and consequences that feel disproportionate or inconsistent, which can create resentment and lower buy-in.

Suggestions for Improvement

Students' suggestions centered on reducing stress, increasing supportive relationships, and making school feel more worth attending. They asked for more mental health supports (including private options), more hands-on/interactive learning, and more consistent follow-through on engaging lessons. They also recommended structural changes that improve day-to-day experience (longer lunch, bringing back early-out days) and reforms that protect student dignity (ending public "failing" notices). Across topics, students emphasized that adult empathy and responsiveness matter: "the coaches... care a lot... they care more if you're doing well than if you're doing your sport well."

School C

Based on feedback from students and parents, the following key findings emerged from focus groups at School C:

- **Physical and Emotional Safety:** Students at School C generally enjoy school and feel safe within their small school environment, with the small size fostering familiarity and security. Physical illness is the primary reason for absence, though some students attend even when sick due to sports, academics, or the belief that attending is easier than making up work.
- **Motivation to Attend:** Social connections are the strongest motivators for attendance, particularly friendships and relationships with trusted adults. Many students avoid missing school to stay on track academically; students are also motivated when they have meaningful roles like working the coffee cart or participating in sports.

- **Variability in Student Attitudes:** Parents confirm that students are generally motivated to attend, especially when they have something to look forward to, but getting students to school can be a daily struggle especially as they age; similarly, social dynamics cut both ways, with positive friendships pulling students in while drama or isolation push them away.
- **Barriers to Attendance** include rural transportation challenges, long travel distances, inconsistent bus access, farm responsibilities, and poor weather conditions. The four-day school week has mixed effects, providing more free time but also concentrating appointments and activities, leading to missed instructional days.
- **Suggestions for Improvement:** Both students and parents emphasize the need for more hands-on, project-based learning and expanded extracurricular opportunities beyond sports; students dislike short passing periods, the no-backpack policy, long lectures, and worksheet-heavy instruction, while parents feel that finding purpose and relevance at school is a key unmet need.

Physical & Emotional Health and Safety Perceptions

Students feel physically and emotionally safe at school, with the small size fostering familiarity and security, though new students may initially feel intimidated before integrating over time. Physical illness is the primary reason for absences, while mental health challenges like stress and fatigue exist but rarely prevent attendance; students cope by "powering through" to avoid falling behind, motivated by routine, friends, sports, and activities like the coffee cart. Parents confirm that students feel safe and have trusted adults at school, with these relationships serving as critical motivators for attendance, though parents largely view emotional well-being and attendance as family responsibilities, emphasizing that school should be treated like a non-negotiable job.

Engagement & Enjoyment for School

Students enjoy hands-on learning, labs, project-based activities, creative electives, and interactive lessons, particularly in English and science, while strongly disliking long lectures and worksheet-heavy instruction that can negatively affect attendance. Most believe it's "harder to miss school than to attend" due to overwhelming makeup work, and many enjoy school once they arrive when content is engaging. Parents report students are more willing to attend when they have something to look forward to, such as sports, extracurriculars, or meaningful roles like the coffee cart, though motivation can decline with age. Parents also observed that social dynamics are double-edged, with positive friendships and belonging pulling students in, while drama and isolation push them away. Parents recommend expanding early Pre-K programs, sports, extracurriculars, and attendance awards to build a culture of regular attendance, noting that students with ownership roles feel stronger purpose and connection, and that academic challenge motivates attendance since makeup work is overwhelming even with strong support.

Motivation to Attend School

Friends, sports, and meaningful roles like the coffee cart are the strongest motivators for attendance, providing social connection and a sense of purpose. When students don't feel like coming, they are pushed by routine, looking forward to specific activities, and knowing that missing creates more work. Having at least one safe adult at school is critical; being able to see that person can turn around a reluctant student's morning. Students with ownership roles feel more connected and attend more regularly, though getting students to school becomes a daily struggle as they get older, even if most enjoy it once they arrive.

Barriers to Attendance

Physical illness is the primary barrier to attendance, but students also face challenges at school like short passing periods (3 minutes), the no-backpack policy requiring them to carry heavy books all day, limited classroom flexibility, and boring or overly rigid teaching styles. Outside school, weather, transportation challenges (especially in this rural setting with long travel distances and inconsistent bus access), farm responsibilities, family obligations (visiting relatives, babysitting siblings), and sports-related travel and fatigue all hinder attendance. The four-day school week has mixed effects, providing more free time but concentrating appointments on school days and contributing to late nights, and parents note that getting students to school becomes increasingly difficult as they age.

Suggestions for Improvement

Students request longer lunch and passing periods, more hands-on and project-based learning, less homework during sports seasons, meaningful roles and responsibilities, direct teacher support, and balanced accountability for family absences. Parents emphasize helping students find purpose and relevance at school through expanded extracurriculars, non-sport activities, early Pre-K programs, field trips, arts, and enrichment opportunities, while noting that rural distance limits career exploration events and that attendance responsibility ultimately sits with families who should treat school as non-negotiable.

School L

Key findings from parent and student focus groups were as follows:

- **Relationships and belonging are central to attendance.** Students emphasized that trusted, supportive adults and positive peer connections help them show up, while negative adult interactions (e.g., teachers "getting mad") can push them away. Parents echoed that connection to teachers and a caring school community matters: "I think we have community here... And I think, our teachers care."
- **Boredom and low rigor undermine engagement (and attendance).** Students repeatedly described classes as not challenging and not engaging, linking this directly to skipping and sleeping: "everyone is bored... people skip all the time because they are so bored." Parents similarly described kids as "Both... depends on the class" when asked whether students are bored or challenged.
- **Stress, grief, and anxiety are attendance factors—especially when students fall behind.** Students reported anxiety spikes when they're behind on assignments and

want ways to keep up (e.g., work ahead of time). Some also described community loss and missing family as affecting motivation to attend.

- **Safety is generally perceived as strong, but not uniform for all students.** Many students said they “always feel safe” and that safety supports attendance; however, they noted some students lack a trusted adult and may feel less safe. Lockdowns increase anxiety.
- **Practical barriers remain significant and are often outside students’ control.** Transportation, weather, distance to the bus, and morning routines were consistent barriers. The district’s “short-route bus” was described as improving tardiness/attendance and addressing safety issues (e.g., dogs).
- **Recognition and incentives are viewed as an actionable lever.** Both groups raised the value of visible, consistent rewards (food, parties, drawings, privileges) for attendance: “Parties” and “Attendance” rewards were directly suggested, alongside examples like skipping finals for strong attendance.
- **Culture and relevance increase motivation.** Students expressed pride in culture and interest in more consistent cultural learning (Crow language, smudging, elders/storytelling). Parents and staff noted strong positive response to cultural storytelling events: “the kids that came... really liked it.”

Physical & Emotional Health and Safety Perceptions

Students largely reported feeling safe at school and described safety as a reason they attend, noting the presence of many adults and trust in teachers, administrators, and friends; at the same time, they recognized that “most students... do not have a trusted adult,” which can shape how safe someone feels. Emotional well-being was tied to both acute stress and longer-term community grief: students said they feel more anxious when they fall behind on work and that grief/missing family can reduce desire to attend. Lockdowns make students nervous, and bullying/cyberbullying was mentioned (especially in elementary) as an ongoing, though reportedly improving, concern. Supports students requested were practical and relational—calm, supportive starts to the day; friends as a buffer; and access to work ahead of time when stressed.

Engagement & Enjoyment for School

Students linked enjoyment to hands-on, interesting lessons and to opportunities beyond routine classroom work—projects, clubs, and especially field trips—saying attendance would improve if school felt more engaging and challenging. Boredom was named as a direct driver of absenteeism (“people skip all the time because they are so bored”), and students described disengagement behaviors like sleeping in class when work feels too easy or repetitive. Parents and staff framed attendance as both an academic and safety/stability indicator and emphasized building a culture of regular attendance early through clear expectations plus positive reinforcement. They also pointed to concrete system changes that can make attendance more feasible, such as the short-route bus,

described as improving attendance/tardiness by reducing safety risks (including dogs) and the burden of walking.

Motivation to Attend School

For students, motivation is strongly social and future-oriented: seeing friends, participating in sports, and working toward graduation/college and making family proud were recurring drivers ("They all want to graduate... make their families proud"). Some students also cited grades and parental expectations as motivators, and both groups discussed food and school meals as meaningful draws ("They'll come for the hot food"). Parents reinforced that friendships and relationships with teachers are key motivators and highlighted school-community connection as a strength: "I think we have community here... And I think, our teachers care." Cultural pride also surfaced as a motivator, alongside a desire for more consistent cultural learning and practices within school.

Barriers to Attendance

Students emphasized transportation and logistics—distance to the bus, lack of rides to reach the bus, and weather—along with difficult morning routines and time pressure. Parents described staying up late (YouTube/TikTok), working-parent schedules, and family obligations as common barriers; they also spoke candidly about structural conditions like overcrowded housing (multiple families living together), limited sleep/space, grandparents raising grandchildren, and broader community challenges with drugs and alcohol disrupting routines and readiness. Some students mentioned being bothered or bullying as a reason some peers avoid school, though adults in the parent group suggested it is not pervasive and can sometimes be used as an excuse. Across groups, barriers were described as overlapping—home environment, routines, and access issues combining to make consistent daily attendance hard even when students like school.

Suggestions for Improvement

Students and parents converged on a set of actionable improvements: increase engagement through projects, hands-on learning, clubs (with better advertising), field trips, and more academic challenge; strengthen supportive adult relationships through calm, respectful communication and regular check-ins when students are stressed or behind. Both groups recommended consistent, visible incentive systems (drawings, food celebrations, privileges) tied to attendance and described examples that felt motivating ("Parties"; attendance rewards; and the idea of skipping finals for strong attendance). Parents and staff also highlighted relevance and pride-building through CTE/work-based opportunities (e.g., maintenance/work-study roles, car/bus detailing) that create ownership and practical skills. For well-being, participants suggested targeted counseling/support groups before or after school—modeled on "turnaround" approaches—paired with substance-use education and coping/survival skills, and they emphasized expanding culturally grounded programming (elders, oral stories, Crow language, more consistent cultural activities) because students respond strongly to it ("can we go one more session?").

School K

In School K, parents and students reflected on the following themes:

- **Relationships are the strongest driver of attendance.** Students and families repeatedly linked showing up to feeling connected to friends and to adults who “know them” and show up for them. *“Friendships are the entire catalysts to come so are relationships with teachers.”* (parent) *“All said they come for their friends.”* (student)
- **Attendance habits start early and are built through routine and expectations.** Parents emphasized preschool/Head Start as the on-ramp for consistency, and described home routines (sleep, mornings) as a primary lever. *“It starts expectations. It starts consistency and a routine.”* (parent)
- **When school feels boring, repetitive, or disconnected from students’ lives, attendance drops.** Both groups described low challenge and limited engaging options as fueling disengagement. *“A lot of kids are bored... ‘are they even here?’”* (parent) *“They all agree that they would rather be more challenged.”* (student)
- **Culture and identity are protective factors—and students want more of it across the school day.** Pride in being “from here,” tribal identity, and culturally grounded experiences were described as motivating; students asked for culture to be integrated beyond a single class. *“They love the culture here and being ‘from here.’”* (parent) *“They only learn about their culture in crow classes and... wish all of their classes were more culturally relevant.”* (student)
- **Stress, safety concerns, and “drama” create emotional barriers to coming.** Students described low trust with adults and anxiety during testing weeks; parents cited recent violence and broader community substance use and instability. *“Drama makes them feel unsafe... They feel somewhat safe.”* (student)
- **Logistics and resources (especially transportation) limit participation and motivation.** Families and students highlighted long distances, rides, and lack of buses for activities/field trips as dampening engagement. *“Everything comes down to funding and transportation!!!”* (parent)

Physical & Emotional Health and Safety Perceptions

Students described mental health and stress as directly affecting attendance, especially during heavy testing weeks, and said staying home can sometimes make them feel “more mentally drained,” while seeing friends at school can help. Many reported feeling only “somewhat safe,” with “drama” and community issues spilling into school, and several shared low trust in adults—fear of being judged or “made fun of”—while naming the counselor and a few teachers/coaches as trusted supports. Parents echoed safety concerns (including anxiety after a recent shooting) and emphasized the importance of consistent emotional supports and culturally grounded wellness practices (e.g., prayer room, elders, smudging) so students feel safe and cared for.

Engagement & Enjoyment for School

Parents and students agreed that attendance rises when school is enjoyable, organized, and meaningful—especially when students feel connected and proud of their school/community. Parents stressed that “regular attendance is learned” early through consistent expectations (preschool/Head Start) and reinforced through positive school culture (sports, tribal identity, mentorship). Students asked for learning that is less like “sitting inside all day” and more hands-on, outdoors, and culturally relevant; they cited leather work, beading, building projects, writing, field trips, pep rallies, and Indian Club as engaging, while describing boredom and limited options as reasons school can feel “not worth attending.”

Motivation to Attend School

Motivation was largely social and identity-based rather than purely academic: friends, sports, clubs, and making family proud (graduation) were repeatedly mentioned. Parents described motivation as strongest when students feel belonging, pride (“warriors”), and supportive relationships with adults who show up at community events; motivation drops when school feels repetitive, unchallenging, or disconnected from life goals (trades, military, real-world skills). Students also noted that encouragement and follow-through matter—trusted adults, accountability through activities, and recognition for good attendance/academics would help—while the perceived lack of school spirit and recognition undermines commitment.

Barriers to Attendance

Families cited unstable home routines (late nights on phones/video games, inconsistent bedtimes, limited adult structure in multigenerational households) as major barriers, alongside illness and significant family obligations (frequent funerals and extended time away after deaths). Students emphasized transportation and distance (some living 30+ minutes away and relying on inconsistent rides), gloomy weather, and emotional barriers such as stress, not wanting to see certain people, or feeling unsafe due to conflict and recent community violence. Both groups also described broader community challenges (substance use, isolation) and limited school resources that reduce the number of positive reasons to come.

Suggestions for Improvement

Across both groups, suggestions clustered around strengthening relationships and supports (regular check-ins, student advocate, trusted adults, more positive calls home), increasing engaging and relevant opportunities (CTE/trades pathways, hands-on projects, group work, outdoor time, field trips), and expanding culturally grounded programming (more smudging, prayer room, elders and community faith leaders, cultural learning integrated across classes). Parents and students also emphasized recognition systems (attendance/honor roll celebrations, meaningful incentives through local partnerships, accountability tied to sports) and repeatedly named transportation/funding as the limiting constraint—especially the lack of buses for activities and enrichment beyond the school day.

School F

The following were key findings from School F:

- **Safety, bullying, and cyberbullying are central drivers of absenteeism.** Students described bullying as “really bad here” and said group chats can “target certain kids,” making them “never want to come to school.” Parents echoed that “insane cyberbullying” is keeping students home and want a clear plan.
- **Trusted relationships at school are protective.** Students repeatedly said having “a trusted adult” who listens and comforts them helps them feel safe and want to attend; parents noted that when teachers build strong relationships, students “want to do better and make them proud.”
- **Stress, anxiety, and feeling overwhelmed (especially in crowded spaces) are closely tied to attendance.** Students described anxiety and “a lot of people around” as reasons to miss, and both groups noted a cycle where absences lead to falling behind and more stress about returning.
- **Engagement matters: students want hands-on, relevant, and culturally connected learning.** Students emphasized “more hands-on learning!!!” and asked for projects, electives, and field trips; families said many students are hands-on learners and that heavy note-taking and boredom contribute to disengagement.
- **Attendance is shaped by home and community realities, not just school choices.** Families described late nights, inconsistent routines, large/multigenerational households, limited clean clothes, Parent absence, and students “raising their siblings” as reasons mornings and daily attendance break down.
- **Routines, incentives, and belonging can strengthen attendance norms—especially if reinforced community-wide.** Parents noted that when many peers miss, absenteeism becomes normalized; incentives (gift cards, Star Rewards, field trips) are motivating, but participants also stressed the need for positive community messaging around coming to school.

Physical & Emotional Health and Safety Perceptions

Students connected illness, anxiety, and social stress directly to attendance, especially when crowded settings feel overwhelming (“a lot of people around”). Bullying and cyberbullying were described as major mental health stressors—students said group chats can “target certain kids” and make them “never want to come to school,” and one student shared being cyberbullied online while gaming. Feeling safe at school was often tied to being with trusted friends and having at least one trusted adult; students said staff who “listen” and make them feel “comfortable” increase their willingness to attend, while fear of retaliation and being labeled a “snitch” can prevent reporting. Parents similarly emphasized that emotional well-being and safety are prerequisites for attendance and called for stronger anti-bullying/cyberbullying supports, including approaches that involve families and elders.

Engagement & Enjoyment for School

Both groups described attendance as partly a “culture” issue: parents noted that when “so many kids miss school,” it can make other students want to miss too, reinforcing a norm of absenteeism. Students and families said school is more enjoyable—and

attendance more likely—when students feel connected through friends, supportive adults, sports, and engaging activities. Boredom and heavy note-taking were repeated concerns; students said classes can be “really boring” and that “a lot of notes” makes them tired and less likely to look forward to school. Families argued that making early school “exciting and fun,” offering more hands-on learning, and strengthening culturally grounded belonging can rebuild positive expectations and routines that support regular attendance.

Motivation to Attend School

Motivation often came from future goals and relationships: students talked about coming to school to “prepare for their future,” earn a diploma, and “make their families proud,” alongside day-to-day motivators like seeing friends, eating meals at school, and participating in sports (needing to attend to practice and stay eligible). When students did not feel like coming, they described routines and family expectations (“I made a promise...to come to school every day”) as drivers that help them push through. Parents highlighted the role of teacher relationships—when students feel known and supported, they try harder and want to “make them proud”—and noted that appropriate challenge and relevance can increase motivation, while chronic absences can make school feel overwhelming and reduce willingness to return.

Barriers to Attendance

Barriers were described as intertwined social, logistical, and family factors. Students emphasized bullying, feeling unsafe around peers, and mental health strain, along with weather/transportation challenges and substance use affecting some students. Families described inconsistent routines (late nights, no bedtimes, gaming), Parent absence, addiction in the household, large/multigenerational homes complicating mornings, lack of clean clothes, and students taking on adult responsibilities (“raising their siblings”). Both groups described a compounding effect: missing school makes it harder to catch up, which increases stress and can deepen avoidance. The four-day week was also framed as intensifying pressure because missing one day has a bigger academic impact, and Fridays can become childcare days for students with family responsibilities.

Suggestions for Improvement

Participants suggested strengthening supports that reduce stress and increase belonging during the school day: expand calming, trusted spaces like the elder room (“they love this”), allow consistent access to coping tools like music, and offer quieter/secluded work areas with one-on-one help. To increase engagement, students and families asked for more hands-on projects, electives (art/music earlier, practical classes), and field trips, plus bringing back and expanding cultural programming (beadwork, cooking, hand game, cultural Fridays, language immersion, elders/traditional teachers). Families also recommended practical family-facing supports: share concrete guidance on healthy routines, consider family-based incentives/checklists, and increase parent engagement structures. Many students strongly preferred returning to a five-day week to reduce the intensity of long days and make attendance feel more manageable.

School A

Feedback from parent and student focus groups conducted at School A helped to identify what supports and hinders regular school attendance:

- **Small School Advantage:** The intimate setting creates natural accountability and belonging. "The kids all feel very seen and known, very noticeable. If one kid is gone, it's very apparent," one parent shared. Students echoed this, with one stating that "since this school is still little in the middle of nowhere, no one knows [it] exist[s]...which makes me feel a lot more safer."
- **Activity-Driven Motivation:** Both parents and students identified special activities as primary attendance motivators rather than regular academic content. Parents appreciated field trips, swimming lessons, and special events, while students enthusiastically cited "PE...critical thinking...swim days" as their favorite aspects of school.
- **Relationship Quality Matters:** Teacher-student relationships emerged as critically important, with both positive and concerning aspects. Parents praised exceptional teachers, while students expressed discomfort with specific teacher behaviors that created fear.
- **Developmental Considerations:** Parents recognized age-related mood fluctuations, particularly for tweens and teens, as natural attendance challenges unrelated to school quality. Students confirmed that mental health and motivation varied significantly by developmental stage.
- **Infrastructure Gaps:** Both groups identified the need for indoor recreation space given harsh weather conditions, as well as restored or new programs in art and music.

Physical & Emotional Health and Safety Perceptions

Physical illness is the primary health-related barrier to attendance, though students show resilience—attending even with minor colds when possible. Mental health significantly affects some students, with one sharing, "Most of the time it's mental that I stay home, [it] makes it hard to come to school." Parents acknowledged age-related emotional fluctuations, particularly for tweens and teens. Students generally feel physically safe due to the school's small size and remote location, but specific teacher behaviors create fear and discomfort. Students described feeling unsafe when one teacher "gets a little like, mean, one of the time when she slammed her hand when [student] was talking back, that made us all afraid," noting she can be "cranky" and "kind of scary."

While quality adult relationships impact student comfort, feeling safe doesn't necessarily increase attendance motivation, however. Students said this "doesn't help" with wanting to come to school. Parents praised exceptional teachers, with one in particular seen as "an absolute Godsend." Anxious students benefit tremendously from an environment where they feel "seen" and "heard" without "hundreds of eyes" on them. Students cope with stress by talking to teachers, parents, or friends, and spending time with pets or

comfort items. However, as one student noted, severe safety concerns override all coping strategies: "If I'm not feeling safe, I don't want to come to school."

Engagement & Enjoyment for School

At School A, special activities like PE, swimming, critical thinking, and movie days serve as the primary motivators for attendance, with one student candidly stating, "I never want to go to school unless it's like a fun day, like movie day." Students show limited enthusiasm for regular academic content, noting, "If it's a normal day, I'm just bored." Parents confirmed that special events drive attendance, with one Parent sharing that their student "doesn't want to miss swimming...not gonna miss the bounce house." There was also appreciation for the school's advantage over larger districts, where "last year in kinder, in his bigger school district, he had one field trip all year...[this year at School A] they've already gone, like, six places." Despite this engagement gap, parents valued the balance of academic and recreational time, noting "It's not like, it's super academic all the time" and "They've got lots of recess," while the small school environment naturally promotes attendance through visibility since "if one kid is gone, it's very apparent" and "The kids all feel very seen and known."

Motivation to Attend School

Student motivation to attend School A is driven primarily by social connections and special activities, with friendships emerging as a critical factor. Parents identified "the friends side of it...connections" as the first response when discussing excitement about school, and for some students this provided transformative experiences as "She's been homeschooled for the last five years...these are her first friends...she's loving it." Teacher relationships also play a vital role, with parents emphasizing "The most important? Teachers." Recognition and rewards motivate students through both formal systems and parental incentives, with one student sharing "My mom makes a deal with me... If she knows that I've been wanting something for a while, then she'll say that if I go for like, the whole week, then she'll get it." Preferred activities such as PE ("I love PE, like PE is my favorite."), swimming days, and critical thinking (described as "playing board games in the afternoon") strongly drive attendance. When motivation is low, students rely on parental support, awareness that missing school means "more work," and the promise of special activities, though some students indicated that when they don't want to attend, nothing helps overcome their resistance.

Barriers to Attendance

Barriers to attendance at School A include significant physical illness and mental health challenges, with students noting "I'm just tired. I just don't want to wake up," and fatigue from staying up late. Developmental factors play a role, particularly for tweens and teens, as parents observed mood-based resistance unrelated to school quality: "The teenage girl, it's getting like harder and harder to get her going...but yeah, nothing to do with the environment." Students experience boredom with regular academic content, creating engagement gaps between special activities and typical school days. Specific teacher behaviors raise concerns, while loud noises also challenge students with sensitive ears. Additionally, weather conditions and lack of indoor recreation space present environmental challenges, and transportation may be underutilized, as one student

expressed, "We have a bus, but not a lot of people ride it," which suggests potential logistical barriers for some families.

Suggestions for Improvement

Both parents and students strongly advocated for restoring art and music programs and adding new offerings like science, baking, or cooking. The most critical infrastructure need is an indoor recreation space to accommodate harsh weather conditions. Students want more engaging academic content incorporating games, physical activity, and hands-on learning, plus increased frequency of special events like movie days, family nights, and plays that drive attendance enthusiasm.

Students need gentler teacher interactions with less yelling and "cranky" behavior, along with fair and consistent treatment. They believe the school should expand emotional support systems by maintaining access to trusted adults and opportunities to talk through concerns. While the school successfully provides individualized attention that allows students to progress at their own pace, it should continue addressing specific needs like sensitivity to loud noises and connecting academic content to individual student interests to boost engagement.

School E

Focus groups with parents and students at School E centered on the following themes related to attendance, engagement, and school culture:

- **Trusted adults, positive teacher relationships, and friendships** emerged as primary motivators for attendance when present.
- **School E students face significant mental health struggles** related to trauma, anxiety about world events, and stress, **compounded by physical health issues and rural healthcare access barriers**. Distance to medical appointments requires full-day absences, weather frequently disrupts attendance, and transportation challenges persist for families living far from bus stops.
- **Both students and parents identified lack of consistent school routines, standards, and follow-through** as major concerns affecting engagement and trust. For example, while students appreciate the incentive structure (no semester exams for 90%+ grade with under 6 absences, bowling trip for 95% attendance), the system unfairly penalizes medical absences, creating significant frustration and demotivation.
- **Suggestions were provided to improve academic engagement**. Students and parents requested more project-based learning, updated curriculum, trade programs, and fewer lecture/note-taking approaches. Both groups emphasized the dramatic decline in school pride, with reduced homecoming activities and limited opportunities for students to feel ownership of their school.
- **Parents acknowledged that family attitudes toward school are the strongest predictor of attendance**, with students from uninvolved or overly busy households facing the greatest challenges. Lack of consistent bedtimes, excessive screen

time, insufficient parental discipline, and late family work schedules undermine attendance readiness.

Physical & Emotional Health and Safety Perceptions

Students reported feeling physically safe at school due to the tight-knit community where "everyone knows everyone." The presence of regular police checks and trust in law enforcement's quick response time further enhance feelings of safety. Students identified multiple trusted adults at school they can turn to for support. Parents noted that while students "feel safe at school," some don't feel safe "at home all the time." They emphasized the need for students to have "an adult to connect with for big moments that the kids know how to reach out to."

Mental and emotional health significantly impact attendance. Students described how "mental health is really draining" and they "can't do anything when they are experiencing [difficult] days." The cumulative effect of trauma means "school doesn't feel important" to them. One student shared that being too stressed out to come to school because "the news is really scary," and they feel there is little hope for their future. Students identified several coping mechanisms they would like at school: breaks during the day, ability to listen to music, fidgets, study hall, and the ability to contact parents when anxious.

Physical health issues also compound attendance challenges. Students with chronic conditions like migraines miss approximately "1/3 of school," and others find they cannot attend school or concentrate when they are sleep deprived. The rural location often causes students to miss school when doctor appointments are over an hour away.

Engagement & Enjoyment for School

Students demonstrate varying engagement levels depending on teaching approach, with a strong preference for hands-on, project-based learning over the current content-heavy curriculum. They report receiving "a ton of course work and notes and hardly any hands-on learning," particularly in science classes where they "just read and don't do any hands-on labs." While students enjoy specific offerings like sports (a top motivator), personal finance, career development, gothic literature, math, and art, they want "more projects in hands on learning opportunities" across all subjects. Advanced students experience boredom with online-only dual enrollment options and wish for more challenging in-person classes. Parents emphasized that family attitudes toward school directly shape student engagement: "when parents prioritize school, children attend regularly," but many students lack support when parents are uninvolved or heavily working. Both groups stressed the need for updated curriculum and more frequent engaging events beyond sports—things "to look forward to every week or month" that "break up the monotony of standardized testing and curriculum constantly."

The attendance reward system motivates students but has critical flaws. Students "love" that maintaining 90%+ grades with under 6 absences exempts them from semester exams, and the bowling trip for 95% attendance is popular. However, medical absences count against these rewards, creating significant frustration. Students with chronic migraines or injuries like torn ACLs get disqualified despite legitimate health needs, and

even "a quick 45 minute dentist appointment is a full day missed" due to rural travel distances. School spirit has declined dramatically, with reduced homecoming activities (they "use to let kids out half of the day to do floats and they don't do that anymore"), a student council that only hosts two events yearly, no pep club or pep band, and no ability to attend away sporting events without receiving unexcused absences. Both students and parents want to restore school pride and ownership but "don't know how to change that."

Motivation to Attend School

Both students and parents identified friends as the primary motivator for attendance, with students explicitly stating their "number one thing is friends" followed by sports. The social connections at school provide the main draw for daily attendance. Beyond friendships, students are motivated by educational goals, recognizing they "need their diploma for their futures," and appreciate practical courses like career development and personal finance. The attendance reward system motivates many students despite its flaws, particularly the unfair penalization of medical absences. Positive teacher relationships with educators who are "fun," "reasonable with rules," and have "good senses of humor" also encourage attendance, as does the structure and routine that "forces them to do stuff."

Parents emphasized that family attitudes play the decisive role in attendance:. They stated that parents play the biggest role and if parents are concerned about school, their kids go to school, but if parents are working or not involved, then their kids don't come. The school currently lacks adequate "support for kids that have uninvolved parents or parents that work a ton." Both groups stressed that motivation depends on consistent teachers and on having engaging activities to anticipate regularly. Parents noted that "students need things to look forward to" beyond athletics.

Barriers to Attendance

Students and parents identified multiple interconnected barriers to attendance at School E. Mental health challenges are significant, with students feeling "drained" and unable to focus during difficult periods. Anxiety about world events creates hopelessness, as students report being "too stressed" about the future and find "the news is really scary," making school feel unimportant. Physical health compounds these issues: students with chronic conditions like migraines miss approximately one-third of school, and rural healthcare access requires full-day absences for appointments over an hour away. Academic overwhelm creates a destructive cycle where students fall so far behind that they feel "they might as well miss more," while teachers lack time to provide individualized catch-up support. Weather frequently disrupts attendance in this rural area, with both students and teachers getting "snowed in a lot."

Home environment factors also impact attendance readiness. Parents noted that students "don't have routines at homes" with insufficient sleep due to "families though work really late which push bedtime way too late and then way too much screentime." A concerning trend is parents who "want to be friends and don't have a lot of discipline at home right now," resulting in excessive screen time and lack of structure. Rural transportation poses challenges beyond weather, with families struggling to reach distant

bus stops and older siblings responsible for younger children facing tardiness issues. Students from large families struggle with consistency, and some "feel safe at school but not at home all the time." Finally, teacher inconsistency undermines engagement. Students emphasized that "kids like routine and don't like when teachers get off the routine and are wishy washy," while "too many teachers wearing too many hats and doing too many jobs" creates an unpredictable environment with inconsistent standards and follow-through.

Suggestions for Improvement

Students and parents identified several priority areas for improvement. In terms of curriculum and instruction, requests were made to increase hands-on, project-based learning instead of constant "coursework and notes," update outdated curriculum to be more relevant to student interests, add trade and skills programs like woodworking, expand middle school offerings including art classes and electives, and provide in-person advanced classes for high-achieving students beyond online dual enrollment. Attendance policies should be revised to excuse medical absences from counting against rewards (the most urgent need), allow students to attend away sporting events without penalty, provide adequate time for makeup work, and create clearer, more consistent policies around excused/unexcused absences. School culture and spirit can be revived through restored homecoming traditions like half-day float building, establishing a pep club and pep bus for away games, creating ownership opportunities so students can "feel pride and ownership of their school," and increasing frequency of engaging weekly or monthly events beyond just sports.

Student wellbeing improvements include reducing overwhelming homework loads, allowing music during work time to help focus and reduce stress, providing fidgets and sensory tools, creating study hall time, allowing gum and snacks, ensuring every student has a designated trusted adult, and considering cell phone restrictions since students "would feel way better during the day if they weren't bombarded with the news and social media." Teacher practices need greater consistency in routines and standards across classrooms, improved follow-through on commitments, better listening to students without making assumptions or sharing private information, expanded capacity for relationship-building, more opportunities for student input on preferences, and maintaining reasonable expectations with good humor. Finally, family support systems are needed for students with uninvolved or extensively working parents, more flexible tardiness policies when older siblings transport younger ones, and resources to help families establish consistent routines around bedtimes and screen time limits.

School N

Key findings from a School N parent and students included:

- **Belonging and relationships are the strongest drivers of attendance.** Students and adults repeatedly tied showing up to feeling connected to friends and having at least one trusted adult at school ("the majority of kids have at least one positive person at school").

- **Falling behind creates a stress spiral that pushes absences.** Students described missing school as stressful because “in a lot of classes they assign daily work and it is really hard to catch up,” which then makes returning feel even harder.
- **Engagement matters:** boredom and repetition reduce motivation. Students called out “notes... so repetitive” and said they would “rather be challenged,” while adults noted that constant reteaching due to absences fuels boredom and apathy for students who do attend (“other kids are so bored”).
- **Practical and systemic barriers are substantial, especially transportation and housing insecurity.** Students pointed to distance, snow, and highway driving (“transportation is really really hard”), while adults emphasized “a massive unhomed population,” poverty, and district boundary/bus route complications.
- **Students and adults want clearer, fairer accountability and consistent follow-through.** Adults said there is “no accountability... no teeth,” and students described uneven enforcement (“depends on the teachers... so why would students follow it”).
- **Basic needs and safety supports are central to attendance.** Adults highlighted that for some students school provides “clothes, showers, and food, and physical and emotional safety,” but limited funding constrains counseling/mental health supports.
- **Policy misalignment creates unintended incentives.** Students described a lunch/tardy dynamic where being >10 minutes late is treated as an absence without detention, which can encourage skipping instead of arriving slightly late.

Physical & Emotional Health and Safety Perceptions

Health and emotional well-being strongly shape attendance: students stay home when sick (often to avoid spreading illness) and when the stress of catching up feels overwhelming, while some find school emotionally supportive because they have people to talk to. Feeling safe is a key condition for showing up—most students reported generally feeling safe, but they described trust in adults as fragile (“when they lose trust with the adults”), and adults emphasized that for many students experiencing housing instability, school is a stabilizing place for “food... showers... and physical and emotional safety.” At the same time, limited funding restricts mental health staffing, and students explicitly asked for “more mental health resources” to make attendance feel more manageable.

Engagement & Enjoyment for School

Engagement is tightly linked to whether students want to attend: hands-on, choice-based learning increases motivation (“more hands on and choices”), while repetitive note-taking and inconsistent classroom expectations contribute to boredom and avoidance (“notes... so repetitive”). Adults echoed that inconsistent attendance creates a cycle where teachers must reteach, which can increase boredom for students who are present and deepen apathy when accountability feels weak (“Admin can’t do anything”). Students and adults also pointed to the importance of building an early,

consistent culture of attendance—strong community traditions and visible school spirit help make school feel worth showing up for, while clear boundaries and routines with families “starting early on” were described as essential for sustained attendance.

Motivation to Attend School

Students’ motivation is primarily social and activity-based: friends and sports were the most frequently cited reasons for attending, alongside electives/clubs and routine, plus practical motivators like staying eligible for activities and not wanting to miss out. Adults reinforced that relationships are a primary driver (“the most important”), especially when students have at least one supportive person at school. Incentives can help when they are meaningful and consistent—students referenced trip eligibility tied to absences and noted there is limited recognition for attendance, while adults said tangible rewards have worked before but follow-through has been inconsistent (“trying to follow through on things more”).

Barriers to Attendance

Barriers include both day-to-day logistics and deeper structural challenges. Transportation emerged as the biggest student-reported barrier due to long distances, snow, and highway conditions (“driving on the highway... makes attendance really hard”), compounded by bus coverage limits outside the immediate area. Students also named the stress of catching up after absences (“it is really hard to catch up”) and the comfort of staying home. Adults highlighted housing insecurity and poverty as chronic barriers (“massive unhomed population”), cascading illness in multi-generational households, and constrained staffing/funding that limits counseling and other supports; they also described inconsistent attendance/tardy practices and limited policy leverage, which weakens prevention and intervention.

Suggestions for Improvement

Across groups, suggestions centered on strengthening relationships and consistency, making learning more engaging, and fixing policy and support gaps that undermine attendance. Students asked for more hands-on learning, group projects, and consistent teacher expectations (“more consistency... over and over”), along with improved lunch quality/logistics and changes to the tardy/absence incentives that currently encourage skipping. Adults emphasized restoring practical agency through clearer, consistently enforced attendance policies (excused/unexcused, tardies, follow-through), and exploring Friday programming in the 4-day week to provide catch-up time and engaging programming. Both groups pointed to the need for expanded mental health supports and enrichment opportunities—while acknowledging that staffing and program expansion ultimately depends on improved funding and capacity.

School D

The School D focus groups revealed several critical themes affecting student attendance and engagement:

- **Social connections, extracurricular activities, and sports** emerged as the strongest motivators for school attendance across all age groups. Younger students "love" school primarily for social reasons, including friends, lunch, recess, and electives. Older students attend largely due to sports eligibility requirements and social relationships.
- **A significant lack of engagement** exists among middle and high school students, who describe feeling extremely bored with minimal academic challenge and "nothing to look forward to" during the school day. Older students also report putting little effort into achieving high grades, leading to disengagement.
- **Routine and predictability** emerged as essential for emotional well-being, with disruptions causing stress particularly for younger students and those with trauma histories. Communication gaps exist when information is shared only digitally, as some families do not use social media or school apps.
- **Trust in adults varies amongst students.** Students identified specific teachers who maintain confidentiality and resolve conflicts through communication, while others have lost trust in teachers who they reported were spreading gossip.
- **The four-day school week** creates substantial challenges for families accessing medical and mental health services, as appointments require missing full instructional days and Friday appointments are rarely available.

Physical & Emotional Health and Safety Perceptions

Students feel physically safe at school and do not worry about gun violence, attributing this to the small, rural community where "everyone knows everyone." Physical safety does not impact attendance decisions. However, emotional safety is a concern because of "constant gossip and rumors," particularly from adults rather than students, which create an uncomfortable environment. As one parent explained, students "don't feel safe more so because of the gossip and rumors that constantly go around town." Mental and emotional health challenges present additional barriers to attendance. Students report extreme boredom, stress from home and school drama, and anxiety about big tests. One parent described how their daughter experienced "a short, very traumatic event" that "cascaded" into ongoing school avoidance, requiring trauma therapy with no local resources available.

Parents emphasized that routine and predictability are essential for emotional well-being. One parent noted distress caused by disruptions, "Even if it's like a fire drill, lockdown, the lights going out...that makes it rough." Another parent stressed the importance of consistent sleep schedules: "That's just as crucial for a 15 year-old as it is for a 5 year-old...helping your kids prioritize sleep sets you up for a good day." Physical environmental factors also affect well-being. Some students feel overstimulated by bright artificial lighting, small classroom spaces, and lack of natural light. They would like dimmer lights and open windows. The monotony of sitting at desks taking notes all day negatively affects mental health, with students expressing that they have "nothing to look forward to" and feeling like they're "doing work nonstop."

Engagement & Enjoyment for School

Engagement levels vary widely by age, subject, and instructional method. Younger elementary students generally enjoy school, with parents reporting "They love it. They love getting up in the morning and school." Social aspects such as friends, recess, lunch, and electives like PE, art, and music are what students enjoy the most. One parent said that their student's "favorite parts of school are lunch, recess, anything that's extra that's going to happen in the day; that's a huge motivating factor." For younger students, academic challenges are not yet a consideration as parents prioritize social skill development and happiness. One parent observed, "There's a huge focus on academics, but I think that there's also a focus on just being happy and socially being a part of the community... [if] kids have had any issues whether they pass or fail a test, they're not upset."

However, older students describe experiences of disengagement and boredom. Parents of middle and high school students reported, "I don't think it's very challenging environment." Students themselves said they "only come to get school over with" and "could be doing something better than going to school." They strongly prefer hands-on activities, group work, and projects over note-taking and textbook work. Shop class, FFA, art, and music receive positive feedback, but these engaging elements are too infrequent to overcome overall monotony. Students want field trips, pep assemblies, and special events, or anything that breaks the routine, in contrast to younger students who benefit from strong daily routines. One parent shared a student's excitement for an upcoming ski trip. The importance of attendance is also recognized differently by different student groups: sports-driven students understand the connection between attendance and eligibility, with one parent noting their athlete daughter "will actually come to school even when a lot of kids stay home sick because she doesn't want to miss practice." However, many students question school's relevance to their futures, particularly those planning to farm or ranch, viewing attendance as sacrificing income-earning opportunities.

Motivation to Attend School

Sports emerged as the most commonly reported motivator for consistent attendance across all focus group participants. Students attend school to maintain eligibility and participate in practice, with all student focus group participants playing sports. As one parent explained, "She's a really great athlete and it's like, that's a huge thing in her world is like, gotta be at school, gotta keep your grades up, can't miss." Social connections with friends also drive attendance, with the desire to see peers and participate in social activities serving as a key pull factor. Parental expectations matter, meaning that students come because parents make them attend, and younger students particularly want to please adults. Special events and activities foster excitement: parents noted that "anything that's on the calendar that's extra before school, after school...any performances and music performance that the kids are really excited about" motivates attendance. One parent said their son "waits all week long, counting down to Lego Club."

For some older students, future goals related to college and career provide motivation, though this is undermined by many students' belief that they will farm or ranch and "won't need school for their futures." Food also serves as a motivator, with parents noting

students' reasons for coming are "food centered. I've heard that a lot this year." The school's existing incentive system, which includes hornet cards for attendance and GPA points in exchange for quiz retakes, homework passes, or half-day passes, receives mixed feedback. Students acknowledged receiving them but found them "not super motivating." Parents discussed a previous attendance incentive system at another school that tied exam exemptions to grades and attendance, describing it as "really effective" but problematic because it encouraged sick students to attend and disadvantaged students who missed school for necessary appointments. Routine itself serves as a motivator for some students who value consistency and see it as preparation for future work schedules, though this practical motivation doesn't overcome boredom and disengagement.

Barriers to Attendance

The four-day school week creates significant challenges for families accessing healthcare and mental health services. Parents described the stress of full-day absences required for out-of-town appointments. One parent elaborated on the mental calculation: "In a five day week, I would justify it in my mind that they're missing 20%. As a parent, what I'm finding is very few places want a whole Friday appointment and so we're forced into one of these other days...I stress over the difference between 90% of their learning minutes versus 25." Friday appointments are rarely available, with parents noting medical offices are often closed Fridays, forcing mid-week absences. One parent described attempting very early morning appointments to minimize absence time but finding their children "exhausted" and unable to engage effectively the rest of the day.

Transportation challenges include traveling long distances to school in rural areas, gravel roads that buses cannot safely navigate, and expensive gas for students who drive themselves when "it's too cold out and the bus doesn't run." Academic barriers include feeling behind in math and science due to previous years without consistent teachers, creating anxiety about current coursework. Students described feeling "blindsided by material" with insufficient time to complete math work and lessons that feel "really rushed." The perceived irrelevance of education to farming and ranching futures creates a fundamental motivation problem, with students calculating the opportunity cost of attending versus earning money. Drama, gossip, and rumors make school emotionally difficult. Gloomy weather affects motivation. Overly bright artificial lighting and rooms with closed windows make students uncomfortable. Most fundamentally, the absence of school spirit, student ownership, and pride leaves students with nothing to feel connected to, describing staff who "don't care so students also don't care."

Suggestions for Improvement

Families strongly advocate for expanding clubs, special events, field trips, and enrichment activities. Parents expressed enthusiasm for emerging Friday programs like basketball skills and STEM activities but want "more options for kids, like starting a little earlier, like younger" with "infrastructure, like fun stuff." Students specifically requested pep club, pep band, BPA, and DECA clubs, plus more frequent pep assemblies to build school spirit. Both parents and students emphasized the importance of hands-on learning, group work, and projects instead of constant note-taking and textbook work. Parents noted

that their children's "favorite parts of school are lunch, recess, anything that's extra" and suggested the school leverage this by creating more special activities students can look forward to during the school day, not just after hours.

Regarding incentives and rewards, students want tangible recognition for attendance such as pizza parties or end-of-semester celebrations, noting that attendance "feels like a chore" without positive reinforcement. Parents suggested exploring a revised version of exam exemption systems that balances effectiveness with compassion and equity, while also addressing chronic tardiness issues, particularly in upper grades where "first period, it doesn't matter who the teacher is...continually there's [only] two kids that show up on time." Communication improvements should include both digital and paper notices, as "not every family's doing things the same way" and some parents "literally don't have social media." Schools should expand career exploration and STEM opportunities while ensuring information about summer programs and enrichment reaches all families. Parents want more structured after-school options for elementary students, noting the current student center "gets a little crazy" for younger children who need more structure. Students desire access to snacks and drinks during the day, preferably through vending machines as fundraisers, and several mentioned wanting free or reduced-price lunch and breakfast programs. Most fundamentally, both groups emphasized the need to rebuild school spirit and create an environment where "people are happy," with adults modeling enthusiasm and care about the school community.

School I

Focus groups were conducted with School I parents, high schoolers, and middle schoolers. Their insights included the following key findings:

- **Attendance is a “meaning + feasibility” issue, not just motivation.** Families and students described absences as driven by whether school feels worth showing up for *and* whether life logistics make attendance possible (illness, travel for appointments, ranch responsibilities, transportation/weather). “Parents consistently emphasized that attendance is less about ‘wanting to skip’ and more about whether school feels worth showing up for or whether daily life makes showing up possible.”
- **Health and rural distance are major, normalizing drivers of absence.** Illness cycles through households and rural medical/behavioral health appointments require long travel and often an all-day absence. “We have a big family... one kid is sick all winter, and it just kind of circles, cycles around our house.” “Most time... it’s normally an all day thing too... it’s kind of an all day deal.”
- **Belonging and relationships are protective.** Parents emphasized trusted adults, small class sizes, and teacher-student relationships as key to keeping students engaged and attending. Students echoed that they generally have a trusted adult and feel safer in a community where “everyone knows everybody.” “Having that relationship with the students... connected on a personal basis, then they’re going to be more excited to go.” “There’s a couple teachers here that my daughter... can go to... if she’s having a bad day...”

- **Peer dynamics can undermine attendance, especially for teens.** Parents highlighted bullying and feeling like an “outcast” for not being a “local,” plus “drama,” as attendance and engagement barriers. “They feel outcast because they weren’t born in this town... there’s a lot of bullying based on not being a local.”
- **Engagement rises with hands-on learning and meaningful activities.** Students repeatedly pointed to shop, band/choir, art, sports, and field trips as reasons to come. Parents also noted School I already has strong activity offerings that help students belong. “Shop and band.” “Art class and the people...”
- **Workload management and clarity matter (especially in HS).** Students reported stress from online classes, last-minute tests, and assignment pile-ups across classes, and asked for clearer “why”/real-world relevance and more consistent grading. “Impulsive tests... the day before we get told that we’re going to test.” “All of the teachers explaining to us why they’re teaching... would help a lot.” “I would like is teachers actually putting in grades.”
- **Incentives work when they connect to real privileges and pathways.** Parents described sports eligibility, work study placements, dual credit, and privileges tied to low absences as motivating—especially in high school. “If they don’t go to school that day, they can’t practice...” “Work study placement programs... we aren’t going to put you in there if you’re struggling with attendance.”

Physical & Emotional Health and Safety Perceptions

Across both groups, physical health—especially contagious illness and injuries—was described as the most common driver of absence, often compounded by rural distance that turns appointments into all-day events. Students said they do not want to “come to school sick and get everybody else sick,” and described weeks when “most the kids were gone because we were all sick,” with long travel making medical visits “an all day deal.” Parents similarly described illness circulating through large households and noted 70–90 mile trips for orthodontics, therapy, and behavioral health that can pull multiple children out at once due to childcare logistics. In terms of safety, high school students generally reported feeling safe (“everyone knows everybody”), and parents emphasized emotional safety as closely tied to adults noticing distress and allowing brief “reset” moments—“being able to step away for a second and just kind of re center yourself is huge for kids.”

Engagement & Enjoyment for School

Engagement and enjoyment were framed as central to “why attendance matters”: students show up more consistently when school is interesting, hands-on, and socially positive, and when they can see the point of being there. Students said they look forward to electives and activities—“Shop and band,” “Sports... and choir,” “Art class and the people”—and noted that variety, projects, and planned field trips/assemblies make school feel worth attending. Parents largely felt School I already offers strong programming for a small rural school, and credited staff for ensuring “stuff available,” calling activities “crucial” for belonging and engagement. Both groups suggested

attendance culture improves when school feels relevant and relational (not just obligatory): “Kids aren’t going to care as much about showing up... if they don’t have that behind them,” and students asked for teachers to explain relevance—“I’d like to know why... how I can use it to real life stuff.”

Motivation to Attend School

Motivation was described less as abstract “grit” and more as a combination of relationships, opportunities, and staying on track. For students, the most consistent motivators were friends/seeing people, activities (sports, music, clubs), and not falling behind—“If I’m there, I know how to do it, and I get it done right away,” and “Remembering that I don’t want to get left behind.” Parents highlighted sports eligibility as a concrete lever (“if they don’t go to school that day, they can’t practice”), and emphasized future-oriented pathways as powerful motivators in high school (dual credit, work study placements, certificates), which reinforce attendance as a real-world responsibility—“We aren’t going to put you in there if you’re struggling with attendance.” Parents also connected motivation to classroom conditions: when instruction is organized, responsive, and caring (“If the person that’s leading that job doesn’t show you... ‘I care,’ then they’re not going to follow suit”), students are more likely to feel their presence matters.

Barriers to Attendance

Barriers clustered around rural logistics, health, and school experience factors that can erode willingness to attend. Parents emphasized recurring illness in large families, long-distance appointments (medical/orthodontic/therapy and behavioral health), and seasonal ranch demands (shipping, brandings, calving) as major constraints—“We’re so far away from everywhere,” and “nobody wants to work on ranches anymore” meaning kids are “needed more” at home. Students similarly named “transportation,” “weather,” “branding,” and widespread sickness, and added academic/organizational barriers that make returning from absence harder: online classes, delayed grading, and feeling expected to catch up alone—“Whenever we’re gone... it’s always on us to do it... It’s very, very discouraging.” Social barriers also surfaced: parents noted bullying/feeling like an “outcast” for not being “local,” and students described “drama” as a stressor even if severe bullying was not widely reported.

Suggestions for Improvement

Suggestions focused on relationship-based support, more engaging learning, better workload/communication systems, and stigma-free access to help. Parents recommended strengthening adult-student relationships and proactive outreach to families (not only when attendance becomes a problem), and teaching “real-world” communication habits such as checking and responding to email and contacting teachers when absent—“Okay, you’re gone, so email your teachers...” They also recommended normalizing short “reset” breaks for emotional regulation. High school students emphasized timely grading (especially for online classes), clearer support and walkthroughs for missed work, and adults being welcoming rather than punitive after absences—“It’s good to see you... instead of... blaming you for not being there.” Students also suggested improvements to school spirit and proposed more

private/normalized counselor check-ins so seeking help isn't visible or stigmatized—"No one wants to walk into the counselor's office..." and recommended more hands-on, project-based options and clearer explanations of purpose ("All of the teachers explaining to us why they're teaching... would help a lot.").

School M

The following were key findings from focus groups with School M students and parents:

- **Relationships are the biggest attendance lever.** Both parents and students repeatedly described *friends* and supportive adults as the primary reason students come to school ("I'd say their friends."; "Number one." re: relationships; "friends, friends...").
- **Mental health and stress are major drivers of absence.** Students named depression and anxiety as reasons it can be "hard getting up in the morning" ("If you have depression, it's hard getting up in the morning.").
- **Bullying/peer conflict (and perceived unfairness in discipline) pushes students away from school.** Parents highlighted "the bullying and negative peer pressure" as a key deterrent; students described persistent bullying (including racist harassment) and "There was no punishment" / favoritism that "they favorite the boys."
- **Home routines and late-night device use affect readiness and attendance.** Parents described phone/gaming use disrupting sleep ("They don't sleep at night."; "They can't live without their phone.") and saw routines as essential.
- **Health care access and travel are concrete, recurring barriers.** Parents described missing school for winter illness and medical appointments requiring travel ("I had appointments for my kids in Billings, and I had to take all of them.").
- **Students attend more when school is engaging, hands-on, and relevant.** Students were energized by collaborative projects ("Like group projects, really fun.") and wanted more electives (baking/home economics, band/choir, life skills, tech/"coding," clubs).
- **Culture, pride, and community-based learning can strengthen engagement.** Parents and students both asked for more culturally rooted learning ("Trying to incorporate some of this history, Crow history... their bloodline.") and noted pride at sports events.

Physical & Emotional Health and Safety Perceptions

Students and parents described both physical health (winter illness, medical needs, travel for appointments) and emotional well-being as central to attendance. Students emphasized mental health—especially depression—as making mornings and motivation difficult ("If you have depression, it's hard getting up in the morning."), and said supportive relationships (friends, hugs, and a trusted teacher) can help regulate stress enough to still attend. Safety perceptions were mixed: some students reported feeling safer at school than at home ("I like school better than home,") but still voiced worries

about extreme events like shootings/lockdowns ("Shootings"). Parents generally felt students are safe at school, but both groups pointed to bullying and peer conflict as a major threat to emotional safety.

Engagement & Enjoyment for School

Across both groups, students are most likely to attend when school is enjoyable, social, and hands-on, and when the school actively reinforces attendance as a norm. Students said engaging instruction and collaboration make them want to come ("Like group projects, really fun."), and they asked for more electives and clubs (baking/home economics, band/choir with performances, tech/engineering-style projects, and after-school options). Parents stressed that attendance matters, but noted daily realities (fatigue from late-night phones/gaming, illness, and travel) can undermine even strong intentions; they also highlighted foundational home routines, and early starts (Head Start/early education) as key to building a lasting culture of attendance.

Motivation to Attend School

Motivation to attend is anchored in belonging and positive relationships—especially friends and trusted adults—along with sports and opportunities to succeed. Parents said students look forward to school primarily because of friendships and supportive staff ("I'd say their friends"; "They love everyone."), and emphasized the importance of feeling "safe and ready to learn." Students echoed that friends are the top reason they come ("friends, friends...") and also named sports (basketball/volleyball/cross country/football) and academic catch-up support as motivators (wanting time/help after school to keep grades up). Where motivation weakens, both groups pointed to bullying, boredom, and inconsistent support as drivers of disengagement.

Barriers to Attendance

Barriers combine logistics, health access, home routines, and school climate. Parents described repeated absences due to illness and medical travel ("I had appointments for my kids in Billings, and I had to take all of them."), as well as late-night device use that disrupts sleep ("They don't sleep at night."). Students highlighted transportation/rides and harsh weather, plus bullying and conflict—particularly perceived unfair discipline and weak follow-through ("There was no punishment") and favoritism ("they favorite the boys"), including reports of racist harassment toward one student. Both groups suggested that when students don't feel emotionally safe or fairly treated, avoidance increases.

Suggestions for Improvement

Suggestions centered on improving school climate, expanding engaging opportunities, and creating clear, positive reinforcement for attendance. Parents and students wanted stronger anti-bullying expectations and consistent consequences, along with more trusted adult support and ways to reduce stress (relationships, safe spaces, predictable routines). Both groups advocated for more hands-on, relevant learning and options: electives (baking/home ec, life skills/budgeting, tech ed/coding/build projects), clubs (cleanup/service club, chess/math/flag football), field trips, and culturally grounded learning (Crow history, arts, and opportunities like beading/storytelling) ("Trying to

incorporate some of this history, Crow history... their bloodline."). Families also pushed for meaningful recognition systems—assemblies, surprise-box rewards, and trips tied to honor roll/attendance—since students reported limited follow-through on promised rewards.

School H

School H provides specialized educational programming for youth in residential care at on campus and students in need of Day Treatment from surrounding school districts in the county. Feedback from students and Parents revealed the following key findings:

- **Primary Attendance Motivators:** Students attend school primarily for safety, basic needs, and relationships with caring adults, rather than academic reasons. Students feel physically safe due to strong security measures but struggle with emotional safety, particularly around cyberbullying (their #1 concern) and trust in staff.
- **Unique Population:** Both student and parent groups emphasized that this therapeutic school serves students with emotional and trauma-related needs. Mental health challenges, lack of home support for attendance, and past academic trauma significantly impact students' ability and willingness to attend regularly.
- **Staff Relationships:** Relationships with teachers who demonstrate genuine care are the strongest motivator for attendance. Students also appreciate therapists and certain staff members who listen and show empathy but also feel overly monitored and that they lack space to "be kids."
- **Building Confidence and Consistency:** Parents emphasized that staff commitment, small class sizes, and individualized instruction are crucial for building student confidence. They also stressed the importance of routines, consistency, and helping students see that school can help them in the future.
- **Practical Learning Needs:** Both parents and students identified the need for more hands-on learning opportunities, particularly trade-based programs and job skills training that show clear pathways to post-graduation employment. Students want more autonomy (especially regarding music access) and youth-friendly environments.
- **Transportation Barriers:** Very long bus rides (over an hour each way), inconsistent service, and lack of parental resources can create major obstacles to attendance.

Physical & Emotional Health and Safety Perceptions

Students report that when they are struggling physically or mentally, it is difficult to get out of bed and come to school. While students feel physically safe due to School H's strong security measures, including a great lockdown system, bulletproof glass, and a large number of staff on site, emotional safety is unfortunately compromised. Cyberbullying is students' number one concern, and students targeting each other on social media can cause division in the classroom. Trust in staff varies significantly, with students feeling the need to "put up walls" around some staff. Students value staff

members who listen authentically and empathize without judgment but also feel that staff responses often lack follow-through on solving problems. Students also feel over-monitored, even though they know that adults are just looking out for them.

Parents confirmed that students come from homes where they aren't always safe and emphasized that students attend primarily because school is where they are safe, can eat, and can rest. They also come because adults at school care about them. Parents also noted the direct connection between mental health diagnoses (depression, anxiety) and attendance patterns and highlighted the importance of the school's therapeutic structure: "Here every student already has their own team and therapy plans in place. We have such a spectrum of kids that there is already constant communication about kids and their plans or incidents."

Engagement & Enjoyment for School

Students particularly enjoy electives like music and woodshop, value self-paced learning options for credit recovery, and prefer traditional book-and-paper learning methods. They like classes like math where they have built confidence. However, they desire more hands-on experiences, particularly science labs. They appreciate the school's individualized approach, which uses NWEA MAP Growth test scores to accurately place students based on skill level instead of age or grade level like the common public school system.

Parents emphasized that although the kids that want to show up show up for multiple reasons, academia is not at the top of the list. Instead, students attend for safety, meals, rest, and social connection. Parents acknowledged that "A lot of academics have been ruined for these kids," but noted students appreciate this school's smaller class sizes, caring staff, meals, flexibility, and lower academic pressure. Building confidence through individualized instruction is crucial to showing kids they can be successful: "A lot of times past schools have told them that they aren't doing well and they are doing things wrong and we are here to build their confidence." Parents also warned that "Kids that fall between the cracks have way worse attendance because they are being missed. Especially with too big of class sizes."

Motivation to Attend School

Social connection is the primary motivator for students, who like to see their friends and "be teenagers together" at school. Basic needs also drive attendance; students appreciate receiving multiple meals per day despite not loving the food quality. Routine is also crucial for mental health, as it gives students "something to do." It can negatively impact their mental health if their routines are disrupted, but friends provide critical support on difficult days.

Parents emphasized that relationships with caring adults are the most powerful motivator for attendance, explaining many students come into the school without "positive views of adult authority figures." However, when teachers make an effort to make a student feel that they matter and are worthy, it can cause "the hardest kids to flip around and move mountains for a teacher that cares about them." Parents also highlighted practical motivators including meeting basic needs (food, safety, caring adults), credit recovery

opportunities, and job skills training that show clear pathways to employment. They were skeptical about traditional reward programs, noting that "incentives can be a double edge sword" and that "the goal is to get them intrinsically motivated instead of with a materialistic reward."

Barriers to Attendance

Bullying, as mentioned previously, is one of the primary barriers to attendance according to students. Relationship problems make it hard to come to school as well, especially when students break up and want to avoid each other. Transportation is also critical, as many students have over an hour bus ride each way. Family schedules also pose challenges. Most students say their parents "all work all the time," so they have no support getting to school. Weather can also create dangerous conditions, with buses sliding off roads due to ice.

Parents believed that some students in the district "come from homes that don't always support going to school every day." They agreed that transportation is a major barrier due to inadequate resources. There are a lot of parents who don't have vehicles or medically can't drive or work too much, limiting the ways students can get to school. Bus service is inconsistent and takes a long time, with some bus drivers waiting for kids while others don't.

Suggestions for Improvement

Students' top requests include access to music on Spotify, comfort items like blankets, better food, and addressing sensory issues. They want extracurricular activities during the school year, like Dungeons and Dragons club, for example. For academics, they want field trips and more hands-on, project-based learning. Most importantly, students want more autonomy to "just be kids" without being watched by staff.

Parents emphasized that consistent routines are foundational: "When they know what to expect, they are safe. The classes with the most consistent routines are the most successful." They would also like to see expanded career-focused opportunities including job shadowing, licensure programs (HVAC, welding), and a driver's license program. Most critically, as one parent stated: "Every student needs to be seen as a person by someone. This is the foundation that enables all other interventions."

APPENDIX B: SURVEY RESULTS BY DISTRICT

The following presents survey data tables for each districts that completed parent, student and staff surveys. Of note, data tables are only provided if there were a minimum number of respondents; 10 for student and parents surveys, and 5 for staff surveys.

Student survey counts by District

District	Survey Counts
School B	46
School P	7
School G	160
School Q	85
School R	17
School J	735
School C	66
School L	72
School K	47
School F	61
School A	9
School E	62
School N	11
School D	42
School I	47
School M	7
School H	11
Undetermined District	8
Total	1493

Parent survey counts by District

District	Survey Counts
School B	33
School P	17
School G	13
School R	5
School J	29
School C	14
School K	5
School F	8
School A	11
School E	6
School N	20
School D	5
School I	26
Undetermined District	7
Total	199

Staff survey counts by district

District	Survey Counts
School B	32
School P	12
School G	18
School Q	17
School R	16
School J	73
School C	15
School L	9
School K	19
School F	35
School A	2
School E	19
School N	31
School D	15
School I	22
School M	6
School H	47
Total	388

School B

Table B1: Student Survey Results – School B

	Never-Rarely	Some days	Everyday – Almost everyday	Total N
Do you look forward to coming to school?	24.4%	37.8%	37.8%	45
<i>How important are these factors for you to attend school regularly?</i>	Not-somewhat important	Neutral	Important – Very Important	Total N
Being able to participate in extracurricular activities (sports, clubs, etc.)	20.0%	13.3%	66.7%	45
Feeling connected to my friends	8.9%	24.4%	66.7%	45
Having teachers and staff who support me	11.1%	26.7%	62.2%	45
Feeling safe and welcome at school	17.8%	22.2%	60.0%	45
Having a personal interest in the lessons or topics being taught	22.2%	31.1%	46.7%	45
<i>What helps you attend school when you're feeling unmotivated?</i>	Not-Somewhat Helpful	Neutral	Helpful – Very Helpful	Total N
Support from my parents or guardians (e.g., help with morning routines)	43.2%	34.1%	22.7%	44

	Never-Rarely	Some days	Everyday – Almost everyday	Total N
Do you look forward to coming to school?	24.4%	37.8%	37.8%	45
<i>How important are these factors for you to attend school regularly?</i>	Not-somewhat important	Neutral	Important – Very Important	Total N
Encouragement from my teachers or school staff	40.9%	22.7%	36.4%	44
Having a specific goal or reason to attend (e.g., graduation, sports, projects)	13.6%	20.5%	65.9%	44
Talking to a counselor or mentor	50.0%	36.4%	13.6%	44
Being with my friends	13.3%	15.6%	71.1%	45
Having responsibility at school	27.3%	31.8%	40.9%	44
Other (please specify):	14.3%	14.3%	71.4%	7
	Very-Somewhat Hard	Neutral	Somewhat-Very Easy	Total N
Is it easy for you to get to school each day?	15.6%	15.6%	68.9%	45

Table B2: Parent Survey Results – School B

	Not-Somewhat Important	Neutral	Important-Very Important	Total N
How important do you think it is for your student to attend school every day?	17.4%	0.0%	82.6%	23
<i>How important are these factors for your student(s) to attend school regularly?</i>	Not-Somewhat Important	Neutral	Important-Very Important	Total N
Being able to participate in extracurricular activities (sports, clubs, etc.)	26.1%	13.0%	60.9%	23
Feeling connected to their friends	4.3%	4.3%	91.3%	23
Having teachers and staff who support them	4.3%	0.0%	95.7%	23
Having a safe and respectful school environment	0.0%	4.3%	95.7%	23
Having a personal interest in the lessons or topics being taught	0.0%	4.3%	95.7%	23
<i>What supports do you feel help your student(s) attend school when they're feeling unmotivated?</i>	Not-Somewhat Helpful	Neutral	Helpful-Very Helpful	Total N

Support from their parents or caregivers (e.g., morning routine help)	4.3%	0.0%	95.7%	23			
Encouragement from teachers or school staff	4.3%	4.3%	91.3%	23			
Having a specific goal or reason to attend (e.g., graduation, sports, projects)	8.7%	8.7%	82.6%	23			
Talking to a counselor or mentor	26.1%	39.1%	34.8%	23			
Earning rewards for regular attendance	17.4%	21.7%	60.9%	23			
Seeing friends	0.0%	4.3%	95.7%	23			
Having a purpose or responsibility at school	0.0%	0.0%	100.0%	22			
Other (please specify):	100.0%	0.0%	0.0%	1			
To what extent do the following barriers make attendance difficult for your student?	Not-Somewhat Difficult		Neutral		Difficult-Very Difficult		Total N
Academic challenges	91.3%	8.7%	0.0%	23			
Health or medical reasons	73.9%	13.0%	13.0%	23			
Family responsibilities	82.6%	8.7%	8.7%	23			
Lack of transportation	100.0%	0.0%	0.0%	23			
Feeling unmotivated or bored	78.3%	13.0%	8.7%	23			
Not feeling safe at school	100.0%	0.0%	0.0%	23			
Personal or emotional struggles	91.3%	8.7%	0.0%	23			
Weather	100.0%	0.0%	0.0%	23			
Other (please specify below)	75.0%	0.0%	25.0%	4			
	0-2 days	3-5 days	6-8 days	9-11 days	12+	Total N	
How many days of school do you think is okay to miss in a school year?	21.7%	26.1%	30.4%	8.7%	13.0%	23	

Table B3: Staff Survey Results – School B

	Very Little	Somewhat	A Great Deal	Total N
How much does student attendance impact academic performance in your area?	10.0%	20.0%	70.0%	10
<i>The following factors motivate students to attend school regularly.</i>	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Total N
Enjoyment of learning	12.5%	20.8%	66.7%	24
Desire to succeed academically	16.7%	25.0%	58.3%	24
Relevant/interesting coursework	4.2%	20.8%	75.0%	24

Supportive teachers/staff	4.2%	12.5%	83.3%	24
Safe and respectful environment	4.2%	12.5%	83.3%	24
Extracurricular activities	0.0%	4.2%	95.8%	24
Social connections/friends	0.0%	0.0%	100.0%	24
Staying on track academically	20.8%	33.3%	45.8%	24
Access to food	0.0%	12.5%	87.5%	24
Family expectations	16.7%	41.7%	41.7%	24
Other (please specify):	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0
<i>How important are the following in influencing student attendance?</i>	Not-Somewhat Important	Neutral	Important-Very Important	Total N
Participation in extracurricular activities	8.3%	0.0%	91.7%	24
Friendships/social connection	4.2%	0.0%	95.8%	24
Supportive teachers and staff	4.2%	8.3%	87.5%	24
Safe and respectful school environment	4.2%	8.3%	87.5%	24
Personal interest in lessons or topics	4.2%	20.8%	75.0%	24
<i>What supports help unmotivated students attend?</i>	Not-Somewhat Helpful	Neutral	Helpful-Very Helpful	Total N
Parental/caregiver support	8.3%	4.2%	87.5%	24
Encouragement from teachers/staff	12.5%	8.3%	79.2%	24
Clear personal goals (graduation, sports, etc)	8.3%	4.2%	87.5%	24
Talking to a counselor/mentor	16.7%	20.8%	62.5%	24
Incentives or rewards for attendance	25.0%	25.0%	50.0%	24
Seeing friends	0.0%	8.3%	91.7%	24
Having a purpose or responsibility at school	8.3%	8.3%	83.3%	24
Other (please specify):	0.0%	0.0%	100.0%	1
<i>How often do the following cause student absences or tardiness?</i>	Never-Sometimes	Often	Frequently-Chronically	Total N
Academic challenges	43.5%	26.1%	30.4%	23
Health/medical reasons issues	25.0%	8.3%	66.7%	24
Family obligations	54.2%	20.8%	25.0%	24
Home instability	4.2%	16.7%	79.2%	24
Transportation issues	66.7%	12.5%	20.8%	24
Lack of motivation/boredom	25.0%	16.7%	58.3%	24
Feeling unsafe at school	87.5%	12.5%	0.0%	24
Personal/emotional struggles	20.8%	29.2%	50.0%	24
Weather	91.7%	4.2%	4.2%	24
Work obligations (for older students)	83.3%	16.7%	0.0%	24
Other (please specify):	0.0%	0.0%	100.0%	1

<i>How helpful are the following supports for improving attendance?</i>	Not-Somewhat Helpful	Neutral	Helpful-Very Helpful	Total N
Attendance monitoring systems	12.5%	20.8%	66.7%	24
Flexible transportation options	25.0%	29.2%	45.8%	24
One-on-one attention/mentoring	8.3%	16.7%	75.0%	24
Engaging extracurricular programs	12.5%	8.3%	79.2%	24
Relevant curriculum aligned to their interests	8.3%	29.2%	62.5%	24
Mental health supports	8.3%	8.3%	83.3%	24
Parent/caregiver involvement	4.2%	0.0%	95.8%	24
Community outreach/engagement	12.5%	20.8%	66.7%	24
Attendance incentives	8.3%	33.3%	58.3%	24
Other (please specify):	100.0%	0.0%	0.0%	1

School P

Student Survey n>10

Table B4: Parent Survey Results – School P

	Not-Somewhat Important	Neutral	Important-Very Important	Total N
How important do you think it is for your student to attend school every day?	37.5%	0.0%	62.5%	16
<i>How important are these factors for your student(s) to attend school regularly?</i>	Not-Somewhat Important	Neutral	Important-Very Important	Total N
Being able to participate in extracurricular activities (sports, clubs, etc.)	6.3%	0.0%	93.8%	16
Feeling connected to their friends	6.3%	12.5%	81.3%	16
Having teachers and staff who support them	6.3%	0.0%	93.8%	16
Having a safe and respectful school environment	6.3%	0.0%	93.8%	16
Having a personal interest in the lessons or topics being taught	12.5%	12.5%	75.0%	16
<i>What supports do you feel help your student(s) attend school when they're feeling unmotivated?</i>	Not-Somewhat Helpful	Neutral	Helpful-Very Helpful	Total N
Support from their parents or caregivers (e.g., morning routine help)	6.3%	6.3%	87.5%	16
Encouragement from teachers or school staff	12.5%	12.5%	75.0%	16

Having a specific goal or reason to attend (e.g., graduation, sports, projects)	6.3%	0.0%	93.8%	16		
Talking to a counselor or mentor	50.0%	37.5%	12.5%	16		
Earning rewards for regular attendance	31.3%	6.3%	62.5%	16		
Seeing friends	18.8%	18.8%	62.5%	16		
Having a purpose or responsibility at school	6.3%	18.8%	75.0%	16		
Other (please specify):	0.0%	0.0%	100.0%	2		
<i>To what extent do the following barriers make attendance difficult for your student?</i>	Not-Somewhat Difficult	Neutral	Difficult-Very Difficult	Total N		
Academic challenges	71.4%	14.3%	14.3%	7		
Health or medical reasons	57.1%	14.3%	28.6%	7		
Family responsibilities	85.7%	0.0%	14.3%	7		
Lack of transportation	85.7%	0.0%	14.3%	7		
Feeling unmotivated or bored	28.6%	28.6%	42.9%	7		
Not feeling safe at school	71.4%	14.3%	14.3%	7		
Personal or emotional struggles	71.4%	0.0%	28.6%	7		
Weather	71.4%	0.0%	28.6%	7		
Other (please specify below)	0.0%	100.0%	0.0%	1		
	0-2 days	3-5 days	6-8 days	9-11 days	12+	Total N
How many days of school do you think is okay to miss in a school year?	6.3%	43.8%	37.5%	12.5%	0.0%	16

Table B5: Staff Survey Results – School P

	Very Little	Somewhat	A Great Deal	Total N
How much does student attendance impact academic performance in your area?	10.0%	20.0%	70.0%	10
<i>The following factors motivate students to attend school regularly.</i>	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Total N
Enjoyment of learning	30.0%	20.0%	50.0%	10
Desire to succeed academically	20.0%	20.0%	60.0%	10
Relevant/interesting coursework	30.0%	10.0%	60.0%	10
Supportive teachers/staff	0.0%	10.0%	90.0%	10
Safe and respectful environment	0.0%	0.0%	100.0%	10
Extracurricular activities	0.0%	10.0%	90.0%	10
Social connections/friends	0.0%	10.0%	90.0%	10
Staying on track academically	20.0%	30.0%	50.0%	10
Access to food	10.0%	20.0%	70.0%	10
Family expectations	10.0%	30.0%	60.0%	10

Other (please specify):	0.0%	100.0%	0.0%	1
<i>How important are the following in influencing student attendance?</i>	Not-Somewhat Important	Neutral	Important-Very Important	Total N
Participation in extracurricular activities	0.0%	0.0%	100.0%	10
Friendships/social connection	10.0%	0.0%	90.0%	10
Supportive teachers and staff	10.0%	0.0%	90.0%	10
Safe and respectful school environment	10.0%	10.0%	80.0%	10
Personal interest in lessons or topics	10.0%	30.0%	60.0%	10
<i>What supports help unmotivated students attend?</i>	Not-Somewhat Helpful	Neutral	Helpful-Very Helpful	Total N
Parental/caregiver support	10.0%	10.0%	80.0%	10
Encouragement from teachers/staff	10.0%	10.0%	80.0%	10
Clear personal goals (graduation, sports, etc)	20.0%	10.0%	70.0%	10
Talking to a counselor/mentor	20.0%	60.0%	20.0%	10
Incentives or rewards for attendance	20.0%	50.0%	30.0%	10
Seeing friends	10.0%	10.0%	80.0%	10
Having a purpose or responsibility at school	30.0%	10.0%	60.0%	10
Other (please specify):	0.0%	100.0%	0.0%	1
<i>How often do the following cause student absences or tardiness?</i>	Never-Sometimes	Often	Frequently-Chronically	Total N
Academic challenges	60.0%	30.0%	10.0%	10
Health/medical reasons issues	20.0%	10.0%	70.0%	10
Family obligations	50.0%	20.0%	30.0%	10
Home instability	20.0%	30.0%	50.0%	10
Transportation issues	100.0%	0.0%	0.0%	10
Lack of motivation/boredom	20.0%	30.0%	50.0%	10
Feeling unsafe at school	80.0%	10.0%	10.0%	10
Personal/emotional struggles	33.3%	11.1%	55.6%	9
Weather	100.0%	0.0%	0.0%	10
Work obligations (for older students)	100.0%	0.0%	0.0%	10
Other (please specify):	100.0%	0.0%	0.0%	1
<i>How helpful are the following supports for improving attendance?</i>	Not-Somewhat Helpful	Neutral	Helpful-Very Helpful	Total N
Attendance monitoring systems	50.0%	20.0%	30.0%	10
Flexible transportation options	50.0%	30.0%	20.0%	10
One-on-one attention/mentoring	40.0%	30.0%	30.0%	10
Engaging extracurricular programs	20.0%	10.0%	70.0%	10

Relevant curriculum aligned to their interests	20.0%	20.0%	60.0%	10
Mental health supports	30.0%	50.0%	20.0%	10
Parent/caregiver involvement	10.0%	10.0%	80.0%	10
Community outreach/engagement	30.0%	30.0%	40.0%	10
Attendance incentives	20.0%	40.0%	40.0%	10
Other (please specify):	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0

School G

Table B6: Student Survey Results – School G

	Never-Rarely	Some days	Everyday – Almost everyday	Total N
Do you look forward to coming to school?	22.9%	37.9%	39.2%	153
<i>How important are these factors for you to attend school regularly?</i>	Not-somewhat important	Neutral	Important – Very Important	Total N
Being able to participate in extracurricular activities (sports, clubs, etc.)	18.8%	21.3%	60.0%	160
Feeling connected to my friends	7.5%	15.6%	76.9%	160
Having teachers and staff who support me	15.6%	39.4%	45.0%	160
Feeling safe and welcome at school	18.1%	25.6%	56.3%	160
Having a personal interest in the lessons or topics being taught	16.3%	36.3%	47.5%	160
<i>What helps you attend school when you're feeling unmotivated?</i>	Not-Somewhat Helpful	Neutral	Helpful – Very Helpful	Total N
Support from my parents or guardians (e.g., help with morning routines)	24.7%	27.2%	48.1%	158
Encouragement from my teachers or school staff	32.3%	29.7%	38.0%	158
Having a specific goal or reason to attend (e.g., graduation, sports, projects)	8.2%	20.9%	70.9%	158
Talking to a counselor or mentor	38.7%	31.6%	29.7%	155
Being with my friends	11.0%	10.3%	78.7%	155
Having responsibility at school	27.6%	28.8%	43.6%	156
Other (please specify):	28.2%	25.6%	46.2%	39
	Very-Somewhat Hard	Neutral	Somewhat-Very Easy	Total N
Is it easy for you to get to school each day?	8.2%	17.7%	74.1%	158

	Never-Rarely	Some days	Everyday – Almost everyday	Total N
Do you look forward to coming to school?	22.9%	37.9%	39.2%	153
<i>How important are these factors for you to attend school regularly?</i>	Not-somewhat important	Neutral	Important – Very Important	Total N

Parent Survey n<10

Table B7: Staff Survey Results – School G

	Very Little	Somewhat	A Great Deal	Total N
How much does student attendance impact academic performance in your area?	0.0%	14.3%	85.7%	14
<i>The following factors motivate students to attend school regularly.</i>	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Total N
Enjoyment of learning	21.4%	35.7%	42.9%	14
Desire to succeed academically	7.1%	42.9%	50.0%	14
Relevant/interesting coursework	7.1%	42.9%	50.0%	14
Supportive teachers/staff	0.0%	14.3%	85.7%	14
Safe and respectful environment	7.1%	0.0%	92.9%	14
Extracurricular activities	0.0%	15.4%	84.6%	13
Social connections/friends	0.0%	0.0%	100.0%	14
Staying on track academically	7.1%	64.3%	28.6%	14
Access to food	0.0%	0.0%	100.0%	14
Family expectations	0.0%	50.0%	50.0%	14
Other (please specify):	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0
<i>How important are the following in influencing student attendance?</i>	Not-Somewhat Important	Neutral	Important-Very Important	Total N
Participation in extracurricular activities	7.1%	0.0%	92.9%	14
Friendships/social connection	7.1%	7.1%	85.7%	14
Supportive teachers and staff	0.0%	21.4%	78.6%	14
Safe and respectful school environment	0.0%	7.1%	92.9%	14
Personal interest in lessons or topics	7.1%	14.3%	78.6%	14
<i>What supports help unmotivated students attend?</i>	Not-Somewhat Helpful	Neutral	Helpful-Very Helpful	Total N
Parental/caregiver support	0.0%	7.1%	92.9%	14
Encouragement from teachers/staff	0.0%	14.3%	85.7%	14
Clear personal goals (graduation, sports, etc)	14.3%	35.7%	50.0%	14

Talking to a counselor/mentor	7.1%	21.4%	71.4%	14
Incentives or rewards for attendance	21.4%	14.3%	64.3%	14
Seeing friends	7.1%	14.3%	78.6%	14
Having a purpose or responsibility at school	7.1%	14.3%	78.6%	14
Other (please specify):	33.3%	33.3%	33.3%	3
<i>How often do the following cause student absences or tardiness?</i>	Never-Sometimes	Often	Frequently-Chronically	Total N
Academic challenges	35.7%	50.0%	14.3%	14
Health/medical reasons issues	38.5%	38.5%	23.1%	13
Family obligations	21.4%	42.9%	35.7%	14
Home instability	0.0%	21.4%	78.6%	14
Transportation issues	35.7%	14.3%	50.0%	14
Lack of motivation/boredom	7.1%	28.6%	64.3%	14
Feeling unsafe at school	64.3%	28.6%	7.1%	14
Personal/emotional struggles	7.1%	50.0%	42.9%	14
Weather	71.4%	14.3%	14.3%	14
Work obligations (for older students)	78.6%	14.3%	7.1%	14
Other (please specify):	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0
<i>How helpful are the following supports for improving attendance?</i>	Not-Somewhat Helpful	Neutral	Helpful-Very Helpful	Total N
Attendance monitoring systems	50.0%	28.6%	21.4%	14
Flexible transportation options	21.4%	21.4%	57.1%	14
One-on-one attention/mentoring	21.4%	21.4%	57.1%	14
Engaging extracurricular programs	7.1%	14.3%	78.6%	14
Relevant curriculum aligned to their interests	7.1%	35.7%	57.1%	14
Mental health supports	7.1%	14.3%	78.6%	14
Parent/caregiver involvement	0.0%	7.1%	92.9%	14
Community outreach/engagement	0.0%	14.3%	85.7%	14
Attendance incentives	7.1%	28.6%	64.3%	14
Other (please specify):	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0

School Q

Table B8: Student Survey Results – School Q

	Never-Rarely	Some days	Everyday – Almost everyday	Total N
Do you look forward to coming to school?	14.8%	16.0%	69.1%	81
<i>How important are these factors for you to attend school regularly?</i>	Not-somewhat important	Neutral	Important – Very Important	Total N

Being able to participate in extracurricular activities (sports, clubs, etc.)	27.1%	11.8%	61.2%	85
Feeling connected to my friends	8.2%	12.9%	78.8%	85
Having teachers and staff who support me	13.1%	19.0%	67.9%	84
Feeling safe and welcome at school	15.5%	20.2%	64.3%	84
Having a personal interest in the lessons or topics being taught	12.9%	15.3%	71.8%	85
<i>What helps you attend school when you're feeling unmotivated?</i>	Not-Somewhat Helpful	Neutral	Helpful – Very Helpful	Total N
Support from my parents or guardians (e.g., help with morning routines)	12.0%	15.7%	72.3%	83
Encouragement from my teachers or school staff	11.9%	27.4%	60.7%	84
Having a specific goal or reason to attend (e.g., graduation, sports, projects)	11.9%	11.9%	76.2%	84
Talking to a counselor or mentor	21.4%	19.0%	59.5%	84
Being with my friends	10.7%	13.1%	76.2%	84
Having responsibility at school	19.0%	23.8%	57.1%	84
Other (please specify):	37.5%	37.5%	25.0%	8
	Very-Somewhat Hard	Neutral	Somewhat-Very Easy	Total N
Is it easy for you to get to school each day?	5.1%	15.4%	79.5%	78

Parent Survey n<10

Table B9: Staff Survey Results – School Q

	Very Little	Somewhat	A Great Deal	Total N
How much does student attendance impact academic performance in your area?	0.0%	33.3%	66.7%	15
<i>The following factors motivate students to attend school regularly.</i>	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Total N
Enjoyment of learning	0.0%	13.3%	86.7%	15
Desire to succeed academically	0.0%	20.0%	80.0%	15
Relevant/interesting coursework	0.0%	33.3%	66.7%	15
Supportive teachers/staff	0.0%	6.7%	93.3%	15

Safe and respectful environment	0.0%	6.7%	93.3%	15
Extracurricular activities	0.0%	6.7%	93.3%	15
Social connections/friends	0.0%	0.0%	100.0%	15
Staying on track academically	0.0%	26.7%	73.3%	15
Access to food	0.0%	0.0%	100.0%	15
Family expectations	0.0%	33.3%	66.7%	15
Other (please specify):	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0
<i>How important are the following in influencing student attendance?</i>	Not-Somewhat Important	Neutral	Important-Very Important	Total N
Participation in extracurricular activities	6.7%	0.0%	93.3%	15
Friendships/social connection	6.7%	0.0%	93.3%	15
Supportive teachers and staff	6.7%	0.0%	93.3%	15
Safe and respectful school environment	6.7%	0.0%	93.3%	15
Personal interest in lessons or topics	13.3%	13.3%	73.3%	15
<i>What supports help unmotivated students attend?</i>	Not-Somewhat Helpful	Neutral	Helpful-Very Helpful	Total N
Parental/caregiver support	0.0%	13.3%	86.7%	15
Encouragement from teachers/staff	0.0%	6.7%	93.3%	15
Clear personal goals (graduation, sports, etc)	0.0%	6.7%	93.3%	15
Talking to a counselor/mentor	0.0%	20.0%	80.0%	15
Incentives or rewards for attendance	6.7%	6.7%	86.7%	15
Seeing friends	0.0%	6.7%	93.3%	15
Having a purpose or responsibility at school	0.0%	20.0%	80.0%	15
Other (please specify):	0.0%	0.0%	100.0%	2
<i>How often do the following cause student absences or tardiness?</i>	Never-Sometimes	Often	Frequently-Chronically	Total N
Academic challenges	71.4%	14.3%	14.3%	14
Health/medical reasons issues	13.3%	33.3%	53.3%	15
Family obligations	40.0%	33.3%	26.7%	15
Home instability	33.3%	20.0%	46.7%	15
Transportation issues	53.3%	6.7%	40.0%	15
Lack of motivation/boredom	26.7%	33.3%	40.0%	15
Feeling unsafe at school	80.0%	6.7%	13.3%	15
Personal/emotional struggles	13.3%	33.3%	53.3%	15
Weather	53.3%	26.7%	20.0%	15
Work obligations (for older students)	80.0%	6.7%	13.3%	15
Other (please specify):	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0
<i>How helpful are the following supports for improving attendance?</i>	Not-Somewhat Helpful	Neutral	Helpful-Very Helpful	Total N
Attendance monitoring systems	0.0%	6.7%	93.3%	15

Flexible transportation options	0.0%	6.7%	93.3%	15
One-on-one attention/mentoring	0.0%	6.7%	93.3%	15
Engaging extracurricular programs	0.0%	6.7%	93.3%	15
Relevant curriculum aligned to their interests	0.0%	6.7%	93.3%	15
Mental health supports	0.0%	0.0%	100.0%	15
Parent/caregiver involvement	0.0%	0.0%	100.0%	15
Community outreach/engagement	0.0%	33.3%	66.7%	15
Attendance incentives	0.0%	6.7%	93.3%	15
Other (please specify):	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0

School R

Table B10: Student Survey Results – School R

	Never-Rarely	Some days	Everyday – Almost everyday	Total N
Do you look forward to coming to school?	18.8%	43.8%	37.5%	16
<i>How important are these factors for you to attend school regularly?</i>	Not-somewhat important	Neutral	Important – Very Important	Total N
Being able to participate in extracurricular activities (sports, clubs, etc.)	18.8%	6.3%	75.0%	16
Feeling connected to my friends	0.0%	25.0%	75.0%	16
Having teachers and staff who support me	18.8%	25.0%	56.3%	16
Feeling safe and welcome at school	18.8%	18.8%	62.5%	16
Having a personal interest in the lessons or topics being taught	12.5%	31.3%	56.3%	16
<i>What helps you attend school when you're feeling unmotivated?</i>	Not-Somewhat Helpful	Neutral	Helpful – Very Helpful	Total N
Support from my parents or guardians (e.g., help with morning routines)	12.5%	31.3%	56.3%	16
Encouragement from my teachers or school staff	37.5%	31.3%	31.3%	16
Having a specific goal or reason to attend (e.g., graduation, sports, projects)	12.5%	25.0%	62.5%	16
Talking to a counselor or mentor	50.0%	37.5%	12.5%	16
Being with my friends	12.5%	18.8%	68.8%	16
Having responsibility at school	18.8%	50.0%	31.3%	16

Other (please specify):	28.2%	33.3%	38.5%	16
	Very-Somewhat Hard	Neutral	Somewhat-Very Easy	Total N
Is it easy for you to get to school each day?	6.3%	31.3%	62.5%	16

Parent Survey n<10

Table B11: Staff Survey Results – School R

	Very Little	Somewhat	A Great Deal	Total N
How much does student attendance impact academic performance in your area?	0.0%	31.3%	68.8%	16
<i>The following factors motivate students to attend school regularly.</i>	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Total N
Enjoyment of learning	25.0%	6.3%	68.8%	16
Desire to succeed academically	25.0%	12.5%	62.5%	16
Relevant/interesting coursework	18.8%	18.8%	62.5%	16
Supportive teachers/staff	0.0%	25.0%	75.0%	16
Safe and respectful environment	0.0%	18.8%	81.3%	16
Extracurricular activities	0.0%	12.5%	87.5%	16
Social connections/friends	0.0%	12.5%	87.5%	16
Staying on track academically	12.5%	18.8%	68.8%	16
Access to food	0.0%	6.3%	93.8%	16
Family expectations	18.8%	37.5%	43.8%	16
Other (please specify):	0.0%	0.0%	100.0%	2
<i>How important are the following in influencing student attendance?</i>	Not-Somewhat Important	Neutral	Important-Very Important	Total N
Participation in extracurricular activities	0.0%	6.3%	93.8%	16
Friendships/social connection	0.0%	6.3%	93.8%	16
Supportive teachers and staff	0.0%	18.8%	81.3%	16
Safe and respectful school environment	6.3%	18.8%	75.0%	16
Personal interest in lessons or topics	18.8%	18.8%	62.5%	16
<i>What supports help unmotivated students attend?</i>	Not-Somewhat Helpful	Neutral	Helpful-Very Helpful	Total N
Parental/caregiver support	12.5%	25.0%	62.5%	16
Encouragement from teachers/staff	6.3%	6.3%	87.5%	16
Clear personal goals (graduation, sports, etc)	6.3%	6.3%	87.5%	16
Talking to a counselor/mentor	6.3%	25.0%	68.8%	16
Incentives or rewards for attendance	0.0%	0.0%	100.0%	16

Seeing friends	0.0%	0.0%	100.0%	16
Having a purpose or responsibility at school	0.0%	31.3%	68.8%	16
Other (please specify):	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0
<i>How often do the following cause student absences or tardiness?</i>	Never-Sometimes	Often	Frequently-Chronically	Total N
Academic challenges	40.0%	26.7%	33.3%	15
Health/medical reasons issues	12.5%	37.5%	50.0%	16
Family obligations	25.0%	31.3%	43.8%	16
Home instability	12.5%	12.5%	75.0%	16
Transportation issues	50.0%	18.8%	31.3%	16
Lack of motivation/boredom	31.3%	25.0%	43.8%	16
Feeling unsafe at school	62.5%	31.3%	6.3%	16
Personal/emotional struggles	25.0%	37.5%	37.5%	16
Weather	68.8%	25.0%	6.3%	16
Work obligations (for older students)	75.0%	18.8%	6.3%	16
Other (please specify):	0.0%	0.0%	100.0%	1
<i>How helpful are the following supports for improving attendance?</i>	Not-Somewhat Helpful	Neutral	Helpful-Very Helpful	Total N
Attendance monitoring systems	0.0%	6.3%	93.8%	16
Flexible transportation options	0.0%	18.8%	81.3%	16
One-on-one attention/mentoring	0.0%	6.3%	93.8%	16
Engaging extracurricular programs	0.0%	6.3%	93.8%	16
Relevant curriculum aligned to their interests	0.0%	12.5%	87.5%	16
Mental health supports	0.0%	6.3%	93.8%	16
Parent/caregiver involvement	0.0%	6.3%	93.8%	16
Community outreach/engagement	0.0%	0.0%	100.0%	16
Attendance incentives	0.0%	0.0%	100.0%	16
Other (please specify):	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0

School J

Table B12: Student Survey Results – School J

	Never-Rarely	Some days	Everyday – Almost everyday	Total N
Do you look forward to coming to school?	20.2%	27.3%	52.6%	660
<i>How important are these factors for you to attend school regularly?</i>	Not-somewhat important	Neutral	Important – Very Important	Total N
Being able to participate in extracurricular activities (sports, clubs, etc.)	20.0%	24.9%	55.2%	676

	Never-Rarely	Some days	Everyday – Almost everyday	Total N
Do you look forward to coming to school?	20.2%	27.3%	52.6%	660
<i>How important are these factors for you to attend school regularly?</i>	Not-somewhat important	Neutral	Important – Very Important	Total N
Feeling connected to my friends	9.5%	19.5%	70.9%	681
Having teachers and staff who support me	17.3%	31.5%	51.3%	677
Feeling safe and welcome at school	15.6%	29.5%	54.9%	678
Having a personal interest in the lessons or topics being taught	14.6%	31.1%	54.3%	678
<i>What helps you attend school when you're feeling unmotivated?</i>	Not-Somewhat Helpful	Neutral	Helpful – Very Helpful	Total N
Support from my parents or guardians (e.g., help with morning routines)	20.8%	21.5%	57.7%	678
Encouragement from my teachers or school staff	25.0%	32.3%	42.7%	675
Having a specific goal or reason to attend (e.g., graduation, sports, projects)	13.6%	24.0%	62.4%	676
Talking to a counselor or mentor	32.5%	32.8%	34.6%	673
Being with my friends	9.1%	17.1%	73.8%	668
Having responsibility at school	17.2%	32.6%	50.2%	669
Other (please specify):	28.2%	33.3%	38.5%	156
	Very-Somewhat Hard	Neutral	Somewhat-Very Easy	Total N
Is it easy for you to get to school each day?	9.6%	16.6%	73.9%	670

Table B13: Parent Survey Results – School J

	Not-Somewhat Important	Neutral	Important-Very Important	Total N
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How important do you think it is for your student to attend school every day?	31.3%	0.0%	68.8%	16
<i>How important are these factors for your student(s) to attend school regularly?</i>	Not-Somewhat Important	Neutral	Important-Very Important	Total N
Being able to participate in extracurricular activities (sports, clubs, etc.)	12.5%	18.8%	68.8%	16
Feeling connected to their friends	12.5%	0.0%	87.5%	16
Having teachers and staff who support them	0.0%	6.3%	93.8%	16
Having a safe and respectful school environment	0.0%	6.3%	93.8%	16
Having a personal interest in the lessons or topics being taught	0.0%	18.8%	81.3%	16
<i>What supports do you feel help your student(s) attend school when they're feeling unmotivated?</i>	Not-Somewhat Helpful	Neutral	Helpful-Very Helpful	Total N
Support from their parents or caregivers (e.g., morning routine help)	0.0%	6.3%	93.8%	16
Encouragement from teachers or school staff	6.3%	12.5%	81.3%	16
Having a specific goal or reason to attend (e.g., graduation, sports, projects)	6.3%	12.5%	81.3%	16
Talking to a counselor or mentor	12.5%	43.8%	43.8%	16
Earning rewards for regular attendance	0.0%	18.8%	81.3%	16
Seeing friends	6.3%	6.3%	87.5%	16
Having a purpose or responsibility at school	0.0%	18.8%	81.3%	16
Other (please specify):	0.0%	50.0%	50.0%	2
<i>To what extent do the following barriers make attendance difficult for your student?</i>	Not-Somewhat Difficult	Neutral	Difficult-Very Difficult	Total N
Academic challenges	75.0%	18.8%	0.0%	16
Health or medical reasons	43.8%	31.3%	13.0%	16
Family responsibilities	56.3%	13.3%	8.7%	16
Lack of transportation	75.0%	6.3%	0.0%	16
Feeling unmotivated or bored	50.0%	12.5%	8.7%	16
Not feeling safe at school	43.8%	37.5%	0.0%	16

Personal or emotional struggles	50.0%		6.3%		0.0%		16
Weather	75.0%		12.5%		0.0%		16
Other (please specify below)	0.0%		50.0%		5.0%		2
	0-2 days	3-5 days	6-8 days	9-11 days	12+	Total N	
How many days of school do you think is okay to miss in a school year?	0.0%	56.3%	12.5%	6.3%	25.0%		16

Table B14: Staff Survey Results – School J

	Very Little	Somewhat	A Great Deal	Total N
How much does student attendance impact academic performance in your area?	1.4%	13.0%	85.5%	69
<i>The following factors motivate students to attend school regularly.</i>	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Total N
Enjoyment of learning	20.3%	29.0%	50.7%	69
Desire to succeed academically	18.8%	24.6%	56.5%	69
Relevant/interesting coursework	10.1%	39.1%	50.7%	69
Supportive teachers/staff	4.3%	13.0%	82.6%	69
Safe and respectful environment	2.9%	11.6%	85.5%	69
Extracurricular activities	7.2%	11.6%	81.2%	69
Social connections/friends	0.0%	7.2%	92.8%	69
Staying on track academically	26.5%	32.4%	41.2%	68
Access to food	2.9%	11.6%	85.5%	69
Family expectations	20.3%	23.2%	56.5%	69
Other (please specify):	0.0%	66.7%	33.3%	6
<i>How important are the following in influencing student attendance?</i>	Not-Somewhat Important	Neutral	Important-Very Important	Total N
Participation in extracurricular activities	4.3%	11.6%	84.1%	69
Friendships/social connection	1.4%	4.3%	94.2%	69
Supportive teachers and staff	5.8%	5.8%	88.4%	69
Safe and respectful school environment	4.3%	11.6%	84.1%	69

Personal interest in lessons or topics	15.9%	29.0%	55.1%	69
<i>What supports help unmotivated students attend?</i>	Not-Somewhat Helpful	Neutral	Helpful-Very Helpful	Total N
Parental/caregiver support	13.0%	11.6%	75.4%	69
Encouragement from teachers/staff	10.1%	7.2%	82.6%	69
Clear personal goals (graduation, sports, etc)	10.1%	13.0%	76.8%	69
Talking to a counselor/mentor	11.6%	18.8%	69.6%	69
Incentives or rewards for attendance	26.1%	15.9%	58.0%	69
Seeing friends	1.4%	4.3%	94.2%	69
Having a purpose or responsibility at school	10.3%	20.6%	69.1%	68
Other (please specify):	0.0%	100.0%	0.0%	2
<i>How often do the following cause student absences or tardiness?</i>	Never-Sometimes	Often	Frequently-Chronically	Total N
Academic challenges	33.3%	17.4%	49.3%	69
Health/medical reasons issues	21.7%	26.1%	52.2%	69
Family obligations	20.3%	27.5%	52.2%	69
Home instability	8.7%	21.7%	69.6%	69
Transportation issues	31.9%	20.3%	47.8%	69
Lack of motivation/boredom	17.6%	25.0%	57.4%	68
Feeling unsafe at school	75.0%	11.8%	13.2%	68
Personal/emotional struggles	20.3%	29.0%	50.7%	69
Weather	52.2%	30.4%	17.4%	69
Work obligations (for older students)	71.2%	13.6%	15.2%	66
Other (please specify):	25.0%	25.0%	50.0%	4
<i>How helpful are the following supports for improving attendance?</i>	Not-Somewhat Helpful	Neutral	Helpful-Very Helpful	Total N
Attendance monitoring systems	14.5%	13.0%	72.5%	69

Flexible transportation options	11.6%	27.5%	60.9%	69
One-on-one attention/mentoring	13.0%	21.7%	65.2%	69
Engaging extracurricular programs	2.9%	14.5%	82.6%	69
Relevant curriculum aligned to their interests	10.1%	29.0%	60.9%	69
Mental health supports	14.5%	17.4%	68.1%	69
Parent/caregiver involvement	11.6%	7.2%	81.2%	69
Community outreach/engagement	21.7%	18.8%	59.4%	69
Attendance incentives	27.5%	17.4%	55.1%	69
Other (please specify):	0.0%	100.0%	0.0%	5

School C

Table B15: Student Survey Results – School C

	Never-Rarely	Some days	Everyday – Almost everyday	Total N
Do you look forward to coming to school?	19.7%	23.0%	57.4%	61
<i>How important are these factors for you to attend school regularly?</i>	Not-somewhat important	Neutral	Important – Very Important	Total N
Being able to participate in extracurricular activities (sports, clubs, etc.)	28.6%	12.7%	58.7%	63
Feeling connected to my friends	15.9%	14.3%	69.8%	63
Having teachers and staff who support me	7.9%	7.9%	84.1%	63
Feeling safe and welcome at school	9.5%	17.5%	73.0%	63
Having a personal interest in the lessons or topics being taught	12.7%	15.9%	71.4%	63
<i>What helps you attend school when you're feeling unmotivated?</i>	Not-Somewhat Helpful	Neutral	Helpful – Very Helpful	Total N
Support from my parents or guardians (e.g., help with morning routines)	22.2%	14.3%	63.5%	63
Encouragement from my teachers or school staff	11.3%	32.3%	56.5%	62

Having a specific goal or reason to attend (e.g., graduation, sports, projects)	12.7%	6.3%	81.0%	63
Talking to a counselor or mentor	31.7%	30.2%	38.1%	63
Being with my friends	6.5%	14.5%	79.0%	62
Having responsibility at school	24.2%	14.5%	61.3%	62
Other (please specify):	18.2%	18.2%	63.6%	11
	Very-Somewhat Hard	Neutral	Somewhat-Very Easy	Total N
Is it easy for you to get to school each day?	15.0%	5.0%	80.0%	60

Table B16: Parent Survey Results – School C

	Not-Somewhat Important	Neutral	Important-Very Important	Total N
How important do you think it is for your student to attend school every day?	14.3%	0	85.7%	14
<i>How important are these factors for your student(s) to attend school regularly?</i>	Not-Somewhat Important	Neutral	Important-Very Important	Total N
Being able to participate in extracurricular activities (sports, clubs, etc.)	14.3%	14.3%	71.4%	14
Feeling connected to their friends	7.1%	14.3%	78.6%	14
Having teachers and staff who support them	0.0%	0.0%	100.0%	14
Having a safe and respectful school environment	0.0%	7.1%	92.9%	14
Having a personal interest in the lessons or topics being taught	0.0%	21.4%	78.6%	14
<i>What supports do you feel help your student(s) attend school when they're feeling unmotivated?</i>	Not-Somewhat Helpful	Neutral	Helpful-Very Helpful	Total N
Support from their parents or caregivers (e.g., morning routine help)	0.0%	0.0%	100.0%	14
Encouragement from teachers or school staff	0.0%	0.0%	100.0%	14
Having a specific goal or reason to attend (e.g., graduation, sports, projects)	7.1%	0.0%	92.9%	14
Talking to a counselor or mentor	7.1%	35.7%	57.1%	14

Earning rewards for regular attendance	7.1%	28.6%	64.3%	14		
Seeing friends	0.0%	14.3%	85.7%	14		
Having a purpose or responsibility at school	0.0%	7.1%	92.9%	14		
Other (please specify):	25.0%	50.0%	25.0%	4		
To what extent do the following barriers make attendance difficult for your student?	Not-Somewhat Difficult	Neutral	Difficult-Very Difficult	Total N		
Academic challenges	64.3%	21.4%	14.3%	14		
Health or medical reasons	71.4%	7.1%	21.4%	14		
Family responsibilities	78.6%	21.4%	0.0%	14		
Lack of transportation	78.6%	7.1%	14.3%	14		
Feeling unmotivated or bored	64.3%	21.4%	14.3%	14		
Not feeling safe at school	71.4%	7.1%	21.4%	14		
Personal or emotional struggles	57.1%	21.4%	21.4%	14		
Weather	64.3%	14.3%	21.4%	14		
Other (please specify below)	33.3%	66.7%	0.0%	3		
	0-2 days	3-5 days	6-8 days	9-11 days	12+	Total N
How many days of school do you think is okay to miss in a school year?	28.6%	57.1%	7.1%	7.1%	0.0%	14

Table B17: Staff Survey Results – School C

	Very Little	Somewhat	A Great Deal	Total N
How much does student attendance impact academic performance in your area?	9.1%	27.3%	63.6%	11
<i>The following factors motivate students to attend school regularly.</i>	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Total N
Enjoyment of learning	7.7%	15.4%	76.9%	13
Desire to succeed academically	0.0%	23.1%	76.9%	13
Relevant/interesting coursework	7.7%	7.7%	84.6%	13
Supportive teachers/staff	0.0%	0.0%	100.0%	13
Safe and respectful environment	0.0%	0.0%	100.0%	13
Extracurricular activities	0.0%	0.0%	100.0%	13
Social connections/friends	0.0%	0.0%	100.0%	13
Staying on track academically	0.0%	30.8%	69.2%	13
Access to food	0.0%	15.4%	84.6%	13
Family expectations	0.0%	15.4%	84.6%	13
Other (please specify):	0.0%	100.0%	0.0%	1
<i>How important are the following in influencing student attendance?</i>	Not-Somewhat Important	Neutral	Important-Very Important	Total N

Participation in extracurricular activities	0.0%	0.0%	100.0%	13
Friendships/social connection	0.0%	0.0%	100.0%	13
Supportive teachers and staff	0.0%	7.7%	92.3%	13
Safe and respectful school environment	0.0%	7.7%	92.3%	13
Personal interest in lessons or topics	7.7%	15.4%	76.9%	13
<i>What supports help unmotivated students attend?</i>	Not-Somewhat Helpful	Neutral	Helpful-Very Helpful	Total N
Parental/caregiver support	0.0%	7.7%	92.3%	13
Encouragement from teachers/staff	0.0%	7.7%	92.3%	13
Clear personal goals (graduation, sports, etc)	0.0%	0.0%	100.0%	13
Talking to a counselor/mentor	0.0%	23.1%	76.9%	13
Incentives or rewards for attendance	15.4%	30.8%	53.8%	13
Seeing friends	0.0%	7.7%	92.3%	13
Having a purpose or responsibility at school	0.0%	15.4%	84.6%	13
Other (please specify):	0.0%	100.0%	0.0%	1
<i>How often do the following cause student absences or tardiness?</i>	Never-Sometimes	Often	Frequently-Chronically	Total N
Academic challenges	76.9%	7.7%	15.4%	13
Health/medical reasons issues	46.2%	23.1%	30.8%	13
Family obligations	76.9%	7.7%	15.4%	13
Home instability	46.2%	15.4%	38.5%	13
Transportation issues	84.6%	7.7%	7.7%	13
Lack of motivation/boredom	38.5%	15.4%	46.2%	13
Feeling unsafe at school	92.3%	0.0%	7.7%	13
Personal/emotional struggles	69.2%	15.4%	15.4%	13
Weather	100.0%	0.0%	0.0%	13
Work obligations (for older students)	84.6%	7.7%	7.7%	13
Other (please specify):	100.0%	0.0%	0.0%	1
<i>How helpful are the following supports for improving attendance?</i>	Not-Somewhat Helpful	Neutral	Helpful-Very Helpful	Total N
Attendance monitoring systems	30.8%	30.8%	38.5%	13
Flexible transportation options	15.4%	53.8%	30.8%	13
One-on-one attention/mentoring	15.4%	30.8%	53.8%	13
Engaging extracurricular programs	0.0%	15.4%	84.6%	13
Relevant curriculum aligned to their interests	23.1%	0.0%	76.9%	13
Mental health supports	30.8%	15.4%	53.8%	13
Parent/caregiver involvement	0.0%	0.0%	100.0%	13

Community outreach/engagement	23.1%	30.8%	46.2%	13
Attendance incentives	30.8%	30.8%	38.5%	13
Other (please specify):	100.0%	0.0%	0.0%	1

School L

Table B18: Student Survey Results – School L

	Never-Rarely	Some days	Everyday – Almost everyday	Total N
Do you look forward to coming to school?	5.6%	33.3%	61.1%	72
<i>How important are these factors for you to attend school regularly?</i>	Not-somewhat important	Neutral	Important – Very Important	Total N
Being able to participate in extracurricular activities (sports, clubs, etc.)	23.6%	19.4%	56.9%	72
Feeling connected to my friends	15.3%	31.9%	52.8%	72
Having teachers and staff who support me	18.1%	37.5%	44.4%	72
Feeling safe and welcome at school	13.9%	36.1%	50.0%	72
Having a personal interest in the lessons or topics being taught	19.4%	41.7%	38.9%	72
<i>What helps you attend school when you're feeling unmotivated?</i>	Not-Somewhat Helpful	Neutral	Helpful – Very Helpful	Total N
Support from my parents or guardians (e.g., help with morning routines)	22.5%	28.2%	49.3%	71
Encouragement from my teachers or school staff	21.1%	43.7%	35.2%	71
Having a specific goal or reason to attend (e.g., graduation, sports, projects)	12.7%	23.9%	63.4%	71
Talking to a counselor or mentor	32.4%	49.3%	18.3%	71
Being with my friends	8.6%	27.1%	64.3%	70
Having responsibility at school	12.9%	34.3%	52.9%	70
Other (please specify):	26.2%	42.9%	31.0%	42
	Very-Somewhat Hard	Neutral	Somewhat-Very Easy	Total N
Is it easy for you to get to school each day?	5.6%	20.8%	73.6%	72

Parent Survey n<10

Table B19: Staff Survey Results – School L

	Very Little	Somewhat	A Great Deal	Total N
How much does student attendance impact academic performance in your area?	0.0%	12.5%	87.5%	8
<i>The following factors motivate students to attend school regularly.</i>	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Total N
Enjoyment of learning	12.5%	12.5%	75.0%	8
Desire to succeed academically	12.5%	12.5%	75.0%	8
Relevant/interesting coursework	0.0%	37.5%	62.5%	8
Supportive teachers/staff	0.0%	25.0%	75.0%	8
Safe and respectful environment	0.0%	25.0%	75.0%	8
Extracurricular activities	0.0%	12.5%	87.5%	8
Social connections/friends	0.0%	12.5%	87.5%	8
Staying on track academically	0.0%	12.5%	87.5%	8
Access to food	0.0%	25.0%	75.0%	8
Family expectations	0.0%	37.5%	62.5%	8
Other (please specify):	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0
<i>How important are the following in influencing student attendance?</i>	Not-Somewhat Important	Neutral	Important-Very Important	Total N
Participation in extracurricular activities	0.0%	12.5%	87.5%	8
Friendships/social connection	0.0%	12.5%	87.5%	8
Supportive teachers and staff	0.0%	12.5%	87.5%	8
Safe and respectful school environment	0.0%	12.5%	87.5%	8
Personal interest in lessons or topics	0.0%	25.0%	75.0%	8
<i>What supports help unmotivated students attend?</i>	Not-Somewhat Helpful	Neutral	Helpful-Very Helpful	Total N
Parental/caregiver support	0.0%	25.0%	75.0%	8
Encouragement from teachers/staff	0.0%	12.5%	87.5%	8
Clear personal goals (graduation, sports, etc)	0.0%	12.5%	87.5%	8
Talking to a counselor/mentor	0.0%	25.0%	75.0%	8
Incentives or rewards for attendance	0.0%	12.5%	87.5%	8
Seeing friends	0.0%	25.0%	75.0%	8
Having a purpose or responsibility at school	0.0%	25.0%	75.0%	8
Other (please specify):	0.0%	50.0%	50.0%	2
<i>How often do the following cause student absences or tardiness?</i>	Never-Sometimes	Often	Frequently-Chronically	Total N
Academic challenges	14.3%	28.6%	57.1%	7
Health/medical reasons issues	12.5%	0.0%	87.5%	8
Family obligations	0.0%	0.0%	100.0%	7

Home instability	0.0%	0.0%	100.0%	7
Transportation issues	42.9%	14.3%	42.9%	7
Lack of motivation/boredom	14.3%	28.6%	57.1%	7
Feeling unsafe at school	71.4%	14.3%	14.3%	7
Personal/emotional struggles	42.9%	0.0%	57.1%	7
Weather	57.1%	14.3%	28.6%	7
Work obligations (for older students)	57.1%	28.6%	14.3%	7
Other (please specify):	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0
<i>How helpful are the following supports for improving attendance?</i>	Not-Somewhat Helpful	Neutral	Helpful-Very Helpful	Total N
Attendance monitoring systems	0.0%	25.0%	75.0%	8
Flexible transportation options	0.0%	25.0%	75.0%	8
One-on-one attention/mentoring	0.0%	25.0%	75.0%	8
Engaging extracurricular programs	0.0%	25.0%	75.0%	8
Relevant curriculum aligned to their interests	0.0%	25.0%	75.0%	8
Mental health supports	0.0%	25.0%	75.0%	8
Parent/caregiver involvement	0.0%	12.5%	87.5%	8
Community outreach/engagement	0.0%	12.5%	87.5%	8
Attendance incentives	0.0%	12.5%	87.5%	8
Other (please specify):	0.0%	100.0%	0.0%	1

School K

Table B20: Student Survey Results – School K

	Never-Rarely	Some days	Everyday – Almost everyday	Total N
Do you look forward to coming to school?	7.0%	32.6%	60.5%	43
<i>How important are these factors for you to attend school regularly?</i>	Not- somewhat important	Neutral	Important – Very Important	Total N
Being able to participate in extracurricular activities (sports, clubs, etc.)	11.6%	18.6%	69.8%	43
Feeling connected to my friends	14.0%	20.9%	65.1%	43
Having teachers and staff who support me	11.6%	46.5%	41.9%	43
Feeling safe and welcome at school	7.0%	44.2%	48.8%	43
Having a personal interest in the lessons or topics being taught	11.6%	30.2%	58.1%	43

<i>What helps you attend school when you're feeling unmotivated?</i>	Not-Somewhat Helpful	Neutral	Helpful – Very Helpful	Total N
Support from my parents or guardians (e.g., help with morning routines)	14.0%	30.2%	55.8%	43
Encouragement from my teachers or school staff	19.5%	36.6%	43.9%	41
Having a specific goal or reason to attend (e.g., graduation, sports, projects)	2.4%	9.5%	88.1%	42
Talking to a counselor or mentor	32.6%	46.5%	20.9%	43
Being with my friends	9.5%	19.0%	71.4%	42
Having responsibility at school	9.3%	37.2%	53.5%	43
Other (please specify):	25.0%	25.0%	50.0%	12
	Very-Somewhat Hard	Neutral	Somewhat-Very Easy	Total N
Is it easy for you to get to school each day?	0.0%	18.6%	81.4%	43

Parent Survey n<10

Table B21: Staff Survey Results – School K

	Very Little	Somewhat	A Great Deal	Total N
How much does student attendance impact academic performance in your area?	0.0%	15.4%	84.6%	13
<i>The following factors motivate students to attend school regularly.</i>	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Total N
Enjoyment of learning	38.5%	23.1%	38.5%	13
Desire to succeed academically	30.8%	30.8%	38.5%	13
Relevant/interesting coursework	30.8%	30.8%	38.5%	13
Supportive teachers/staff	7.7%	30.8%	61.5%	13
Safe and respectful environment	23.1%	15.4%	61.5%	13
Extracurricular activities	15.4%	0.0%	84.6%	13
Social connections/friends	0.0%	15.4%	84.6%	13
Staying on track academically	30.8%	30.8%	38.5%	13
Access to food	15.4%	23.1%	61.5%	13
Family expectations	23.1%	46.2%	30.8%	13
Other (please specify):	0.0%	0.0%	100.0%	2
<i>How important are the following in influencing student attendance?</i>	Not-Somewhat Important	Neutral	Important-Very Important	Total N
Participation in extracurricular activities	15.4%	0.0%	84.6%	13

Friendships/social connection	7.7%	15.4%	76.9%	13
Supportive teachers and staff	15.4%	15.4%	69.2%	13
Safe and respectful school environment	23.1%	15.4%	61.5%	13
Personal interest in lessons or topics	30.8%	15.4%	53.8%	13
<i>What supports help unmotivated students attend?</i>	Not-Somewhat Helpful	Neutral	Helpful-Very Helpful	Total N
Parental/caregiver support	23.1%	0.0%	76.9%	13
Encouragement from teachers/staff	15.4%	15.4%	69.2%	13
Clear personal goals (graduation, sports, etc)	15.4%	0.0%	84.6%	13
Talking to a counselor/mentor	30.8%	7.7%	61.5%	13
Incentives or rewards for attendance	15.4%	23.1%	61.5%	13
Seeing friends	15.4%	15.4%	69.2%	13
Having a purpose or responsibility at school	23.1%	15.4%	61.5%	13
Other (please specify):	0.0%	0.0%	100.0%	2
<i>How often do the following cause student absences or tardiness?</i>	Never-Sometimes	Often	Frequently-Chronically	Total N
Academic challenges	30.8%	30.8%	38.5%	13
Health/medical reasons issues	7.7%	38.5%	53.8%	13
Family obligations	7.7%	38.5%	53.8%	13
Home instability	0.0%	30.8%	69.2%	13
Transportation issues	23.1%	23.1%	53.8%	13
Lack of motivation/boredom	15.4%	7.7%	76.9%	13
Feeling unsafe at school	84.6%	7.7%	7.7%	13
Personal/emotional struggles	30.8%	38.5%	30.8%	13
Weather	69.2%	15.4%	15.4%	13
Work obligations (for older students)	84.6%	7.7%	7.7%	13
Other (please specify):	0.0%	0.0%	100.0%	3
<i>How helpful are the following supports for improving attendance?</i>	Not-Somewhat Helpful	Neutral	Helpful-Very Helpful	Total N
Attendance monitoring systems	30.8%	23.1%	46.2%	13
Flexible transportation options	38.5%	7.7%	53.8%	13
One-on-one attention/mentoring	38.5%	30.8%	30.8%	13
Engaging extracurricular programs	15.4%	7.7%	76.9%	13
Relevant curriculum aligned to their interests	15.4%	23.1%	61.5%	13
Mental health supports	7.7%	46.2%	46.2%	13
Parent/caregiver involvement	15.4%	0.0%	84.6%	13
Community outreach/engagement	30.8%	7.7%	61.5%	13
Attendance incentives	15.4%	23.1%	61.5%	13

Other (please specify):	0.0%	0.0%	100.0%	1
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School F

Table B22: Student Survey Results – School F

	Never-Rarely	Some days	Everyday – Almost everyday	Total N
Do you look forward to coming to school?	16.7%	37.0%	46.3%	54
<i>How important are these factors for you to attend school regularly?</i>	Not-somewhat important	Neutral	Important – Very Important	Total N
Being able to participate in extracurricular activities (sports, clubs, etc.)	37.0%	13.0%	50.0%	54
Feeling connected to my friends	25.9%	14.8%	59.3%	54
Having teachers and staff who support me	18.5%	29.6%	51.9%	54
Feeling safe and welcome at school	24.1%	22.2%	53.7%	54
Having a personal interest in the lessons or topics being taught	25.9%	33.3%	40.7%	54
<i>What helps you attend school when you're feeling unmotivated?</i>	Not-Somewhat Helpful	Neutral	Helpful – Very Helpful	Total N
Support from my parents or guardians (e.g., help with morning routines)	29.6%	24.1%	46.3%	54
Encouragement from my teachers or school staff	37.7%	30.2%	32.1%	53
Having a specific goal or reason to attend (e.g., graduation, sports, projects)	16.7%	13.0%	70.4%	54
Talking to a counselor or mentor	48.1%	27.8%	24.1%	54
Being with my friends	16.7%	13.0%	70.4%	54
Having responsibility at school	18.5%	37.0%	44.4%	54
Other (please specify):	37.5%	40.6%	21.9%	32
	Very-Somewhat Hard	Neutral	Somewhat-Very Easy	Total N
Is it easy for you to get to school each day?	5.6%	14.8%	79.6%	54

Parent Survey n<10

Table B23: Staff Survey Results – School F

	Very Little	Somewhat	A Great Deal	Total N
How much does student attendance impact academic performance in your area?	3.7%	14.8%	81.5%	27
<i>The following factors motivate students to attend school regularly.</i>	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Total N
Enjoyment of learning	7.1%	25.0%	67.9%	28
Desire to succeed academically	7.1%	28.6%	64.3%	28
Relevant/interesting coursework	0.0%	25.0%	75.0%	28
Supportive teachers/staff	3.6%	7.1%	89.3%	28
Safe and respectful environment	3.6%	7.1%	89.3%	28
Extracurricular activities	0.0%	14.3%	85.7%	28
Social connections/friends	0.0%	7.1%	92.9%	28
Staying on track academically	10.7%	32.1%	57.1%	28
Access to food	3.6%	3.6%	92.9%	28
Family expectations	7.4%	25.9%	66.7%	27
Other (please specify):	0.0%	50.0%	50.0%	2
<i>How important are the following in influencing student attendance?</i>	Not-Somewhat Important	Neutral	Important-Very Important	Total N
Participation in extracurricular activities	3.6%	7.1%	89.3%	28
Friendships/social connection	7.1%	3.6%	89.3%	28
Supportive teachers and staff	3.6%	7.1%	89.3%	28
Safe and respectful school environment	7.1%	3.6%	89.3%	28
Personal interest in lessons or topics	3.6%	17.9%	78.6%	28
<i>What supports help unmotivated students attend?</i>	Not-Somewhat Helpful	Neutral	Helpful-Very Helpful	Total N
Parental/caregiver support	7.7%	11.5%	80.8%	26
Encouragement from teachers/staff	3.7%	7.4%	88.9%	27
Clear personal goals (graduation, sports, etc)	14.8%	14.8%	70.4%	27
Talking to a counselor/mentor	11.1%	11.1%	77.8%	27
Incentives or rewards for attendance	3.7%	7.4%	88.9%	27
Seeing friends	0.0%	3.7%	96.3%	27
Having a purpose or responsibility at school	3.7%	18.5%	77.8%	27
Other (please specify):	0.0%	0.0%	100.0%	3
<i>How often do the following cause student absences or tardiness?</i>	Never-Sometimes	Often	Frequently-Chronically	Total N
Academic challenges	22.2%	11.1%	66.7%	27
Health/medical reasons issues	25.0%	17.9%	57.1%	28
Family obligations	14.8%	25.9%	59.3%	27

Home instability	17.9%	14.3%	67.9%	28
Transportation issues	32.1%	7.1%	60.7%	28
Lack of motivation/boredom	10.7%	25.0%	64.3%	28
Feeling unsafe at school	55.6%	18.5%	25.9%	27
Personal/emotional struggles	21.4%	17.9%	60.7%	28
Weather	64.3%	17.9%	17.9%	28
Work obligations (for older students)	64.3%	21.4%	14.3%	28
Other (please specify):	100.0%	0.0%	0.0%	2
<i>How helpful are the following supports for improving attendance?</i>	Not-Somewhat Helpful	Neutral	Helpful-Very Helpful	Total N
Attendance monitoring systems	17.9%	25.0%	57.1%	28
Flexible transportation options	3.6%	25.0%	71.4%	28
One-on-one attention/mentoring	3.7%	29.6%	66.7%	27
Engaging extracurricular programs	0.0%	21.4%	78.6%	28
Relevant curriculum aligned to their interests	3.6%	28.6%	67.9%	28
Mental health supports	7.1%	17.9%	75.0%	28
Parent/caregiver involvement	0.0%	25.0%	75.0%	28
Community outreach/engagement	7.1%	25.0%	67.9%	28
Attendance incentives	3.6%	17.9%	78.6%	28
Other (please specify):	0.0%	0.0%	100.0%	1

School E

Table B24: Student Survey Results – School E

	Never-Rarely	Some days	Everyday – Almost everyday	Total N
Do you look forward to coming to school?	25.9%	22.4%	51.7%	58
<i>How important are these factors for you to attend school regularly?</i>	Not-somewhat important	Neutral	Important – Very Important	Total N
Being able to participate in extracurricular activities (sports, clubs, etc.)	16.9%	8.5%	74.6%	59
Feeling connected to my friends	13.6%	10.2%	76.3%	59
Having teachers and staff who support me	13.6%	32.2%	54.2%	59
Feeling safe and welcome at school	20.3%	16.9%	62.7%	59
Having a personal interest in the lessons or topics being taught	20.3%	23.7%	55.9%	59

<i>What helps you attend school when you're feeling unmotivated?</i>	Not-Somewhat Helpful	Neutral	Helpful – Very Helpful	Total N
Support from my parents or guardians (e.g., help with morning routines)	20.3%	22.0%	57.6%	59
Encouragement from my teachers or school staff	22.0%	27.1%	50.8%	59
Having a specific goal or reason to attend (e.g., graduation, sports, projects)	15.5%	12.1%	72.4%	58
Talking to a counselor or mentor	31.0%	25.9%	43.1%	58
Being with my friends	11.9%	10.2%	78.0%	59
Having responsibility at school	20.7%	25.9%	53.4%	58
Other (please specify):	40.0%	10.0%	50.0%	10
	Very-Somewhat Hard	Neutral	Somewhat-Very Easy	Total N
Is it easy for you to get to school each day?	11.7%	18.3%	70.0%	60

Parent Survey n<10

Table B25: Staff Survey Results – School E

	Very Little	Somewhat	A Great Deal	Total N
How much does student attendance impact academic performance in your area?	0.0%	31.6%	68.4%	19
<i>The following factors motivate students to attend school regularly.</i>	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Total N
Enjoyment of learning	10.5%	42.1%	47.4%	19
Desire to succeed academically	5.3%	31.6%	63.2%	19
Relevant/interesting coursework	10.5%	42.1%	47.4%	19
Supportive teachers/staff	0.0%	21.1%	78.9%	19
Safe and respectful environment	0.0%	15.8%	84.2%	19
Extracurricular activities	10.5%	0.0%	89.5%	19
Social connections/friends	0.0%	10.5%	89.5%	19
Staying on track academically	10.5%	57.9%	31.6%	19
Access to food	5.3%	15.8%	78.9%	19
Family expectations	10.5%	26.3%	63.2%	19
Other (please specify):	0.0%	100.0%	0.0%	1
<i>How important are the following in influencing student attendance?</i>	Not-Somewhat Important	Neutral	Important-Very Important	Total N
Participation in extracurricular activities	15.8%	0.0%	84.2%	19
Friendships/social connection	15.8%	5.3%	78.9%	19

Supportive teachers and staff	10.5%	21.1%	68.4%	19
Safe and respectful school environment	5.3%	15.8%	78.9%	19
Personal interest in lessons or topics	21.1%	42.1%	36.8%	19
<i>What supports help unmotivated students attend?</i>	Not-Somewhat Helpful	Neutral	Helpful-Very Helpful	Total N
Parental/caregiver support	5.6%	11.1%	83.3%	18
Encouragement from teachers/staff	15.8%	15.8%	68.4%	19
Clear personal goals (graduation, sports, etc)	5.3%	21.1%	73.7%	19
Talking to a counselor/mentor	10.5%	26.3%	63.2%	19
Incentives or rewards for attendance	10.5%	31.6%	57.9%	19
Seeing friends	10.5%	5.3%	84.2%	19
Having a purpose or responsibility at school	21.1%	21.1%	57.9%	19
Other (please specify):	0.0%	33.3%	66.7%	3
<i>How often do the following cause student absences or tardiness?</i>	Never-Sometimes	Often	Frequently-Chronically	Total N
Academic challenges	63.2%	31.6%	5.3%	19
Health/medical reasons issues	21.1%	26.3%	52.6%	19
Family obligations	21.1%	21.1%	57.9%	19
Home instability	21.1%	10.5%	68.4%	19
Transportation issues	36.8%	5.3%	57.9%	19
Lack of motivation/boredom	36.8%	21.1%	42.1%	19
Feeling unsafe at school	78.9%	10.5%	10.5%	19
Personal/emotional struggles	26.3%	31.6%	42.1%	19
Weather	26.3%	15.8%	57.9%	19
Work obligations (for older students)	68.4%	15.8%	15.8%	19
Other (please specify):	33.3%	0.0%	66.7%	3
<i>How helpful are the following supports for improving attendance?</i>	Not-Somewhat Helpful	Neutral	Helpful-Very Helpful	Total N
Attendance monitoring systems	15.8%	26.3%	57.9%	19
Flexible transportation options	10.5%	15.8%	73.7%	19
One-on-one attention/mentoring	15.8%	36.8%	47.4%	19
Engaging extracurricular programs	15.8%	15.8%	68.4%	19
Relevant curriculum aligned to their interests	21.1%	31.6%	47.4%	19
Mental health supports	15.8%	26.3%	57.9%	19
Parent/caregiver involvement	15.8%	10.5%	73.7%	19
Community outreach/engagement	26.3%	21.1%	52.6%	19
Attendance incentives	10.5%	31.6%	57.9%	19
Other (please specify):	0.0%	50.0%	50.0%	2

School N

Student Survey n<10

Table B26: Parent Survey Results – School N

	Not-Somewhat Important	Neutral	Important-Very Important	Total N
How important do you think it is for your student to attend school every day?	41.2%	5.9%	52.9%	17
<i>How important are these factors for your student(s) to attend school regularly?</i>	Not-Somewhat Important	Neutral	Important-Very Important	Total N
Being able to participate in extracurricular activities (sports, clubs, etc.)	17.6%	5.9%	76.5%	17
Feeling connected to their friends	5.9%	23.5%	70.6%	17
Having teachers and staff who support them	0.0%	0.0%	100.0%	17
Having a safe and respectful school environment	0.0%	0.0%	100.0%	17
Having a personal interest in the lessons or topics being taught	5.9%	5.9%	88.2%	17
<i>What supports do you feel help your student(s) attend school when they're feeling unmotivated?</i>	Not-Somewhat Helpful	Neutral	Helpful-Very Helpful	Total N
Support from their parents or caregivers (e.g., morning routine help)	0.0%	5.9%	94.1%	17
Encouragement from teachers or school staff	5.9%	0.0%	94.1%	17
Having a specific goal or reason to attend (e.g., graduation, sports, projects)	0.0%	5.9%	94.1%	17
Talking to a counselor or mentor	11.8%	52.9%	35.3%	17
Earning rewards for regular attendance	17.6%	35.3%	47.1%	17
Seeing friends	5.9%	23.5%	70.6%	17

Having a purpose or responsibility at school	5.9%		5.9%		88.2%		17
Other (please specify):	50.0%		50.0%		0.0%		2
<i>To what extent do the following barriers make attendance difficult for your student?</i>	Not-Somewhat Difficult		Neutral		Difficult-Very Difficult		Total N
Academic challenges	58.8%		29.4%		11.8%		17
Health or medical reasons	52.9%		17.6%		29.4%		17
Family responsibilities	88.2%		5.9%		5.9%		17
Lack of transportation	88.2%		0.0%		11.8%		17
Feeling unmotivated or bored	47.1%		29.4%		23.5%		17
Not feeling safe at school	70.6%		5.9%		23.5%		17
Personal or emotional struggles	47.1%		29.4%		23.5%		17
Weather	88.2%		11.8%		0.0%		17
Other (please specify below)	50.0%		50.0%		0.0%		2
	0-2 days	3-5 days	6-8 days	9-11 days	12+	Total N	
How many days of school do you think is okay to miss in a school year?	5.9%	11.8%	47.1%	17.6%	17.6%	17	

Table B27: Staff Survey Results – School N

	Very Little	Somewhat	A Great Deal	Total N
How much does student attendance impact academic performance in your area?	0.0%	12.0%	88.0%	25
<i>The following factors motivate students to attend school regularly.</i>	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Total N
Enjoyment of learning	33.3%	14.8%	51.9%	27
Desire to succeed academically	18.5%	37.0%	44.4%	27
Relevant/interesting coursework	7.4%	40.7%	51.9%	27
Supportive teachers/staff	3.7%	14.8%	81.5%	27
Safe and respectful environment	0.0%	18.5%	81.5%	27
Extracurricular activities	0.0%	11.1%	88.9%	27
Social connections/friends	3.7%	3.7%	92.6%	27
Staying on track academically	14.8%	51.9%	33.3%	27
Access to food	3.7%	0.0%	96.3%	27
Family expectations	7.7%	38.5%	53.8%	26
Other (please specify):	0.0%	0.0%	100.0%	1
<i>How important are the following in influencing student attendance?</i>	Not-Somewhat Important	Neutral	Important-Very Important	Total N
Participation in extracurricular activities	0.0%	11.1%	88.9%	27
Friendships/social connection	0.0%	3.7%	96.3%	27

Supportive teachers and staff	0.0%	18.5%	81.5%	27
Safe and respectful school environment	0.0%	14.8%	85.2%	27
Personal interest in lessons or topics	3.7%	29.6%	66.7%	27
<i>What supports help unmotivated students attend?</i>	Not-Somewhat Helpful	Neutral	Helpful-Very Helpful	Total N
Parental/caregiver support	18.5%	3.7%	77.8%	27
Encouragement from teachers/staff	7.4%	11.1%	81.5%	27
Clear personal goals (graduation, sports, etc)	7.4%	29.6%	63.0%	27
Talking to a counselor/mentor	11.5%	23.1%	65.4%	26
Incentives or rewards for attendance	11.5%	38.5%	50.0%	26
Seeing friends	7.4%	0.0%	92.6%	27
Having a purpose or responsibility at school	7.4%	22.2%	70.4%	27
Other (please specify):	0.0%	0.0%	100.0%	2
<i>How often do the following cause student absences or tardiness?</i>	Never-Sometimes	Often	Frequently - Chronically	Total N
Academic challenges	40.7%	22.2%	37.0%	27
Health/medical reasons issues	15.4%	19.2%	65.4%	26
Family obligations	19.2%	23.1%	57.7%	26
Home instability	3.7%	18.5%	77.8%	27
Transportation issues	18.5%	18.5%	63.0%	27
Lack of motivation/boredom	3.7%	25.9%	70.4%	27
Feeling unsafe at school	65.4%	15.4%	19.2%	26
Personal/emotional struggles	7.4%	18.5%	74.1%	27
Weather	80.8%	15.4%	3.8%	26
Work obligations (for older students)	34.6%	30.8%	34.6%	26
Other (please specify):	0.0%	0.0%	100.0%	1
<i>How helpful are the following supports for improving attendance?</i>	Not-Somewhat Helpful	Neutral	Helpful-Very Helpful	Total N
Attendance monitoring systems	11.1%	22.2%	66.7%	27
Flexible transportation options	11.1%	33.3%	55.6%	27
One-on-one attention/mentoring	3.7%	37.0%	59.3%	27
Engaging extracurricular programs	7.4%	7.4%	85.2%	27
Relevant curriculum aligned to their interests	11.1%	22.2%	66.7%	27
Mental health supports	3.7%	7.4%	88.9%	27
Parent/caregiver involvement	7.4%	0.0%	92.6%	27
Community outreach/engagement	11.5%	23.1%	65.4%	26
Attendance incentives	18.5%	40.7%	40.7%	27
Other (please specify):	0.0%	0.0%	100.0%	1

School D

Table B28: Student Survey Results – School D

	Never-Rarely	Some days	Everyday – Almost everyday	Total N
Do you look forward to coming to school?	28.6%	42.9%	28.6%	42
<i>How important are these factors for you to attend school regularly?</i>	Not-somewhat important	Neutral	Important – Very Important	Total N
Being able to participate in extracurricular activities (sports, clubs, etc.)	11.9%	23.8%	64.3%	42
Feeling connected to my friends	19.0%	16.7%	64.3%	42
Having teachers and staff who support me	11.9%	21.4%	66.7%	42
Feeling safe and welcome at school	14.3%	14.3%	71.4%	42
Having a personal interest in the lessons or topics being taught	21.4%	31.0%	47.6%	42
<i>What helps you attend school when you're feeling unmotivated?</i>	Not-Somewhat Helpful	Neutral	Helpful – Very Helpful	Total N
Support from my parents or guardians (e.g., help with morning routines)	19.0%	35.7%	45.2%	42
Encouragement from my teachers or school staff	23.8%	28.6%	47.6%	42
Having a specific goal or reason to attend (e.g., graduation, sports, projects)	14.3%	11.9%	73.8%	42
Talking to a counselor or mentor	42.9%	26.2%	31.0%	42
Being with my friends	9.5%	14.3%	76.2%	42
Having responsibility at school	21.4%	38.1%	40.5%	42
Other (please specify):	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0
	Very-Somewhat Hard	Neutral	Somewhat-Very Easy	Total N
Is it easy for you to get to school each day?	11.9%	26.2%	61.9%	42

Parent Survey n<10

Table B29: Staff Survey Results – School D

	Very Little	Somewhat	A Great Deal	Total N
How much does student attendance impact academic performance in your area?	N<10	N<10	N<10	N<10
<i>The following factors motivate students to attend school regularly.</i>	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Total N
Enjoyment of learning	6.7%	20.0%	73.3%	15
Desire to succeed academically	6.7%	33.3%	60.0%	15
Relevant/interesting coursework	0.0%	13.3%	86.7%	15
Supportive teachers/staff	0.0%	6.7%	93.3%	15
Safe and respectful environment	0.0%	6.7%	93.3%	15
Extracurricular activities	0.0%	6.7%	93.3%	15
Social connections/friends	0.0%	0.0%	100.0%	15
Staying on track academically	13.3%	46.7%	40.0%	15
Access to food	0.0%	20.0%	80.0%	15
Family expectations	6.7%	13.3%	80.0%	15
Other (please specify):	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0
<i>How important are the following in influencing student attendance?</i>	Not-Somewhat Important	Neutral	Important-Very Important	Total N
Participation in extracurricular activities	0.0%	0.0%	100.0%	15
Friendships/social connection	6.7%	0.0%	93.3%	15
Supportive teachers and staff	0.0%	0.0%	100.0%	15
Safe and respectful school environment	0.0%	13.3%	86.7%	15
Personal interest in lessons or topics	0.0%	20.0%	80.0%	15
<i>What supports help unmotivated students attend?</i>	Not-Somewhat Helpful	Neutral	Helpful-Very Helpful	Total N
Parental/caregiver support	7.1%	14.3%	78.6%	14
Encouragement from teachers/staff	14.3%	14.3%	71.4%	14
Clear personal goals (graduation, sports, etc)	0.0%	21.4%	78.6%	14
Talking to a counselor/mentor	0.0%	57.1%	42.9%	14
Incentives or rewards for attendance	14.3%	21.4%	64.3%	14
Seeing friends	0.0%	0.0%	100.0%	14
Having a purpose or responsibility at school	14.3%	14.3%	71.4%	14
Other (please specify):	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0
<i>How often do the following cause student absences or tardiness?</i>	Never-Sometimes	Often	Frequently-Chronically	Total N
Academic challenges	66.7%	26.7%	6.7%	15
Health/medical reasons issues	33.3%	46.7%	20.0%	15
Family obligations	53.3%	40.0%	6.7%	15
Home instability	26.7%	40.0%	33.3%	15

Transportation issues	73.3%	20.0%	6.7%	15
Lack of motivation/boredom	26.7%	13.3%	60.0%	15
Feeling unsafe at school	86.7%	6.7%	6.7%	15
Personal/emotional struggles	20.0%	46.7%	33.3%	15
Weather	86.7%	13.3%	0.0%	15
Work obligations (for older students)	66.7%	20.0%	13.3%	15
Other (please specify):	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0
<i>How helpful are the following supports for improving attendance?</i>	Not-Somewhat Helpful	Neutral	Helpful-Very Helpful	Total N
Attendance monitoring systems	20.0%	60.0%	20.0%	15
Flexible transportation options	20.0%	26.7%	53.3%	15
One-on-one attention/mentoring	13.3%	13.3%	73.3%	15
Engaging extracurricular programs	6.7%	6.7%	86.7%	15
Relevant curriculum aligned to their interests	13.3%	40.0%	46.7%	15
Mental health supports	13.3%	33.3%	53.3%	15
Parent/caregiver involvement	13.3%	6.7%	80.0%	15
Community outreach/engagement	20.0%	0.0%	80.0%	15
Attendance incentives	13.3%	20.0%	66.7%	15
Other (please specify):	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0

School I

Table B30: Student Survey Results – School I

	Never-Rarely	Some days	Everyday – Almost everyday	Total N
Do you look forward to coming to school?	29.8%	48.9%	21.3%	47
<i>How important are these factors for you to attend school regularly?</i>	Not-somewhat important	Neutral	Important – Very Important	Total N
Being able to participate in extracurricular activities (sports, clubs, etc.)	10.6%	12.8%	76.6%	47
Feeling connected to my friends	4.3%	8.5%	87.2%	47
Having teachers and staff who support me	8.5%	23.4%	68.1%	47
Feeling safe and welcome at school	8.5%	17.0%	74.5%	47
Having a personal interest in the lessons or topics being taught	14.9%	19.1%	66.0%	47

<i>What helps you attend school when you're feeling unmotivated?</i>	Not-Somewhat Helpful	Neutral	Helpful – Very Helpful	Total N
Support from my parents or guardians (e.g., help with morning routines)	25.5%	10.6%	63.8%	47
Encouragement from my teachers or school staff	38.3%	25.5%	36.2%	47
Having a specific goal or reason to attend (e.g., graduation, sports, projects)	13.0%	13.0%	73.9%	46
Talking to a counselor or mentor	59.6%	25.5%	14.9%	47
Being with my friends	6.4%	8.5%	85.1%	47
Having responsibility at school	27.7%	21.3%	51.1%	47
Other (please specify):	0.0%	100.0%	0.0%	1
	Very-Somewhat Hard	Neutral	Somewhat-Very Easy	Total N
Is it easy for you to get to school each day?	4.3%	12.8%	83.0%	47

Table B31: Parent Survey Results – School I

	Not-Somewhat Important	Neutral	Important-Very Important	Total N
How important do you think it is for your student to attend school every day?	18.2%	0.0%	81.8%	22
<i>How important are these factors for your student(s) to attend school regularly?</i>	Not-Somewhat Important	Neutral	Important-Very Important	Total N
Being able to participate in extracurricular activities (sports, clubs, etc.)	9.1%	9.1%	81.8%	22
Feeling connected to their friends	0.0%	4.5%	95.5%	22
Having teachers and staff who support them	0.0%	9.1%	90.9%	22
Having a safe and respectful school environment	0.0%	4.5%	95.5%	22
Having a personal interest in the lessons or topics being taught	0.0%	13.6%	86.4%	22
<i>What supports do you feel help your student(s) attend school when they're feeling unmotivated?</i>	Not-Somewhat Helpful	Neutral	Helpful-Very Helpful	Total N

Support from their parents or caregivers (e.g., morning routine help)	0.0%		0.0%		100.0%		22
Encouragement from teachers or school staff	4.8%		9.5%		85.7%		21
Having a specific goal or reason to attend (e.g., graduation, sports, projects)	4.8%		4.8%		90.5%		21
Talking to a counselor or mentor	9.1%		50.0%		40.9%		22
Earning rewards for regular attendance	18.2%		27.3%		54.5%		22
Seeing friends	0.0%		4.5%		95.5%		22
Having a purpose or responsibility at school	4.8%		9.5%		85.7%		21
Other (please specify):	0.0%		100.0%		0.0%		2
<i>To what extent do the following barriers make attendance difficult for your student?</i>	Not-Somewhat Difficult		Neutral		Difficult-Very Difficult		Total N
Academic challenges	72.7%		18.2%		9.1%		22
Health or medical reasons	63.6%		13.6%		22.7%		22
Family responsibilities	86.4%		9.1%		4.5%		22
Lack of transportation	86.4%		4.5%		9.1%		22
Feeling unmotivated or bored	68.2%		9.1%		22.7%		22
Not feeling safe at school	77.3%		13.6%		9.1%		22
Personal or emotional struggles	72.7%		4.5%		22.7%		22
Weather	77.3%		13.6%		9.1%		22
Other (please specify below)	0.0%		100.0%		0.0%		2
	0-2 days	3-5 days	6-8 days	9-11 days	12+	Total N	
How many days of school do you think is okay to miss in a school year?	0.0%	40.9%	40.9%	4.5%	13.6%	22	

Table B32: Staff Survey Results – School I

	Very Little	Somewhat	A Great Deal	Total N
How much does student attendance impact academic performance in your area?	5.0%	45.0%	50.0%	20
<i>The following factors motivate students to attend school regularly.</i>	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Total N
Enjoyment of learning	5.0%	20.0%	75.0%	20
Desire to succeed academically	5.0%	20.0%	75.0%	20
Relevant/interesting coursework	5.0%	15.0%	80.0%	20

Supportive teachers/staff	0.0%	15.0%	85.0%	20
Safe and respectful environment	0.0%	5.0%	95.0%	20
Extracurricular activities	0.0%	5.0%	95.0%	20
Social connections/friends	0.0%	0.0%	100.0%	20
Staying on track academically	0.0%	25.0%	75.0%	20
Access to food	0.0%	30.0%	70.0%	20
Family expectations	5.0%	15.0%	80.0%	20
Other (please specify):	0.0%	50.0%	50.0%	2
<i>How important are the following in influencing student attendance?</i>	Not-Somewhat Important	Neutral	Important-Very Important	Total N
Participation in extracurricular activities	0.0%	5.0%	95.0%	20
Friendships/social connection	0.0%	0.0%	100.0%	20
Supportive teachers and staff	0.0%	5.0%	95.0%	20
Safe and respectful school environment	0.0%	10.0%	90.0%	20
Personal interest in lessons or topics	0.0%	20.0%	80.0%	20
<i>What supports help unmotivated students attend?</i>	Not-Somewhat Helpful	Neutral	Helpful-Very Helpful	Total N
Parental/caregiver support	0.0%	15.0%	85.0%	20
Encouragement from teachers/staff	0.0%	20.0%	80.0%	20
Clear personal goals (graduation, sports, etc)	10.0%	10.0%	80.0%	20
Talking to a counselor/mentor	5.0%	30.0%	65.0%	20
Incentives or rewards for attendance	5.0%	55.0%	40.0%	20
Seeing friends	0.0%	0.0%	100.0%	20
Having a purpose or responsibility at school	10.0%	35.0%	55.0%	20
Other (please specify):	0.0%	66.7%	33.3%	3
<i>How often do the following cause student absences or tardiness?</i>	Never-Sometimes	Often	Frequently-Chronically	Total N
Academic challenges	68.4%	15.8%	15.8%	19
Health/medical reasons issues	15.0%	20.0%	65.0%	20
Family obligations	50.0%	5.0%	45.0%	20
Home instability	50.0%	5.0%	45.0%	20
Transportation issues	85.0%	0.0%	15.0%	20
Lack of motivation/boredom	35.0%	25.0%	40.0%	20
Feeling unsafe at school	90.0%	5.0%	5.0%	20
Personal/emotional struggles	60.0%	5.0%	35.0%	20
Weather	90.0%	0.0%	10.0%	20
Work obligations (for older students)	90.0%	5.0%	5.0%	20
Other (please specify):	0.0%	0.0%	100.0%	2

<i>How helpful are the following supports for improving attendance?</i>	Not-Somewhat Helpful	Neutral	Helpful-Very Helpful	Total N
Attendance monitoring systems	40.0%	30.0%	30.0%	20
Flexible transportation options	45.0%	30.0%	25.0%	20
One-on-one attention/mentoring	25.0%	25.0%	50.0%	20
Engaging extracurricular programs	5.0%	20.0%	75.0%	20
Relevant curriculum aligned to their interests	5.0%	20.0%	75.0%	20
Mental health supports	5.0%	20.0%	75.0%	20
Parent/caregiver involvement	10.0%	10.0%	80.0%	20
Community outreach/engagement	10.0%	35.0%	55.0%	20
Attendance incentives	21.1%	36.8%	42.1%	19
Other (please specify):	0.0%	0.0%	100.0%	2

School H

Table B33: Student Survey Results – School H

	Never-Rarely	Some days	Everyday – Almost everyday	Total N
Do you look forward to coming to school?	0.0%	72.7%	27.3%	11
<i>How important are these factors for you to attend school regularly?</i>	Not- somewhat important	Neutral	Important – Very Important	Total N
Being able to participate in extracurricular activities (sports, clubs, etc.)	36.4%	0.0%	63.6%	11
Feeling connected to my friends	0.0%	18.2%	81.8%	11
Having teachers and staff who support me	0.0%	36.4%	63.6%	11
Feeling safe and welcome at school	18.2%	45.5%	36.4%	11
Having a personal interest in the lessons or topics being taught	18.2%	36.4%	45.5%	11
<i>What helps you attend school when you're feeling unmotivated?</i>	Not-Somewhat Helpful	Neutral	Helpful – Very Helpful	Total N
Support from my parents or guardians (e.g., help with morning routines)	27.3%	27.3%	45.5%	11

Encouragement from my teachers or school staff	27.3%	18.2%	54.5%	11
Having a specific goal or reason to attend (e.g., graduation, sports, projects)	18.2%	54.5%	27.3%	11
Talking to a counselor or mentor	54.5%	27.3%	18.2%	11
Being with my friends	0.0%	27.3%	72.7%	11
Having responsibility at school	9.1%	63.6%	27.3%	11
Other (please specify):	0.0%	100.0%	0.0%	1
	Very-Somewhat Hard	Neutral	Somewhat-Very Easy	Total N
Is it easy for you to get to school each day?	0.0%	18.2%	81.8%	11

Parent Survey n<10

Table B34: Staff Survey Results – School H

	Very Little	Somewhat	A Great Deal	Total N
How much does student attendance impact academic performance in your area?	2.3%	41.9%	55.8%	43
<i>The following factors motivate students to attend school regularly.</i>	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Total N
Enjoyment of learning	17.8%	37.8%	44.4%	45
Desire to succeed academically	15.6%	51.1%	33.3%	45
Relevant/interesting coursework	4.4%	28.9%	66.7%	45
Supportive teachers/staff	0.0%	4.4%	95.6%	45
Safe and respectful environment	2.2%	2.2%	95.6%	45
Extracurricular activities	17.8%	40.0%	42.2%	45
Social connections/friends	0.0%	4.5%	95.5%	44
Staying on track academically	13.3%	48.9%	37.8%	45
Access to food	0.0%	13.3%	86.7%	45
Family expectations	11.1%	42.2%	46.7%	45
Other (please specify):	0.0%	25.0%	75.0%	4
<i>How important are the following in influencing student attendance?</i>	Not-Somewhat Important	Neutral	Important-Very Important	Total N
Participation in extracurricular activities	25.0%	36.4%	38.6%	44
Friendships/social connection	0.0%	4.5%	95.5%	44

Supportive teachers and staff	0.0%	6.8%	93.2%	44
Safe and respectful school environment	0.0%	6.8%	93.2%	44
Personal interest in lessons or topics	0.0%	27.3%	72.7%	44
<i>What supports help unmotivated students attend?</i>	Not-Somewhat Helpful	Neutral	Helpful-Very Helpful	Total N
Parental/caregiver support	11.4%	20.5%	68.2%	44
Encouragement from teachers/staff	6.8%	9.1%	84.1%	44
Clear personal goals (graduation, sports, etc)	9.1%	27.3%	63.6%	44
Talking to a counselor/mentor	2.3%	20.5%	77.3%	44
Incentives or rewards for attendance	9.1%	18.2%	72.7%	44
Seeing friends	0.0%	6.8%	93.2%	44
Having a purpose or responsibility at school	9.1%	31.8%	59.1%	44
Other (please specify):	0.0%	50.0%	50.0%	2
<i>How often do the following cause student absences or tardiness?</i>	Never-Sometimes	Often	Frequently-Chronically	Total N
Academic challenges	31.1%	20.0%	48.9%	45
Health/medical reasons issues	24.4%	31.1%	44.4%	45
Family obligations	54.5%	22.7%	22.7%	44
Home instability	17.8%	20.0%	62.2%	45
Transportation issues	53.3%	20.0%	26.7%	45
Lack of motivation/boredom	8.9%	24.4%	66.7%	45
Feeling unsafe at school	72.1%	9.3%	18.6%	43
Personal/emotional struggles	8.9%	8.9%	82.2%	45
Weather	75.6%	8.9%	15.6%	45
Work obligations (for older students)	84.1%	11.4%	4.5%	44
Other (please specify):	100.0%	0.0%	0.0%	1
<i>How helpful are the following supports for improving attendance?</i>	Not-Somewhat Helpful	Neutral	Helpful-Very Helpful	Total N
Attendance monitoring systems	28.9%	48.9%	22.2%	45
Flexible transportation options	22.2%	20.0%	57.8%	45
One-on-one attention/mentoring	9.1%	11.4%	79.5%	44
Engaging extracurricular programs	11.1%	26.7%	62.2%	45
Relevant curriculum aligned to their interests	2.2%	33.3%	64.4%	45
Mental health supports	2.2%	2.2%	95.6%	45
Parent/caregiver involvement	6.7%	8.9%	84.4%	45
Community outreach/engagement	17.8%	17.8%	64.4%	45
Attendance incentives	13.3%	15.6%	71.1%	45
Other (please specify):	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0